









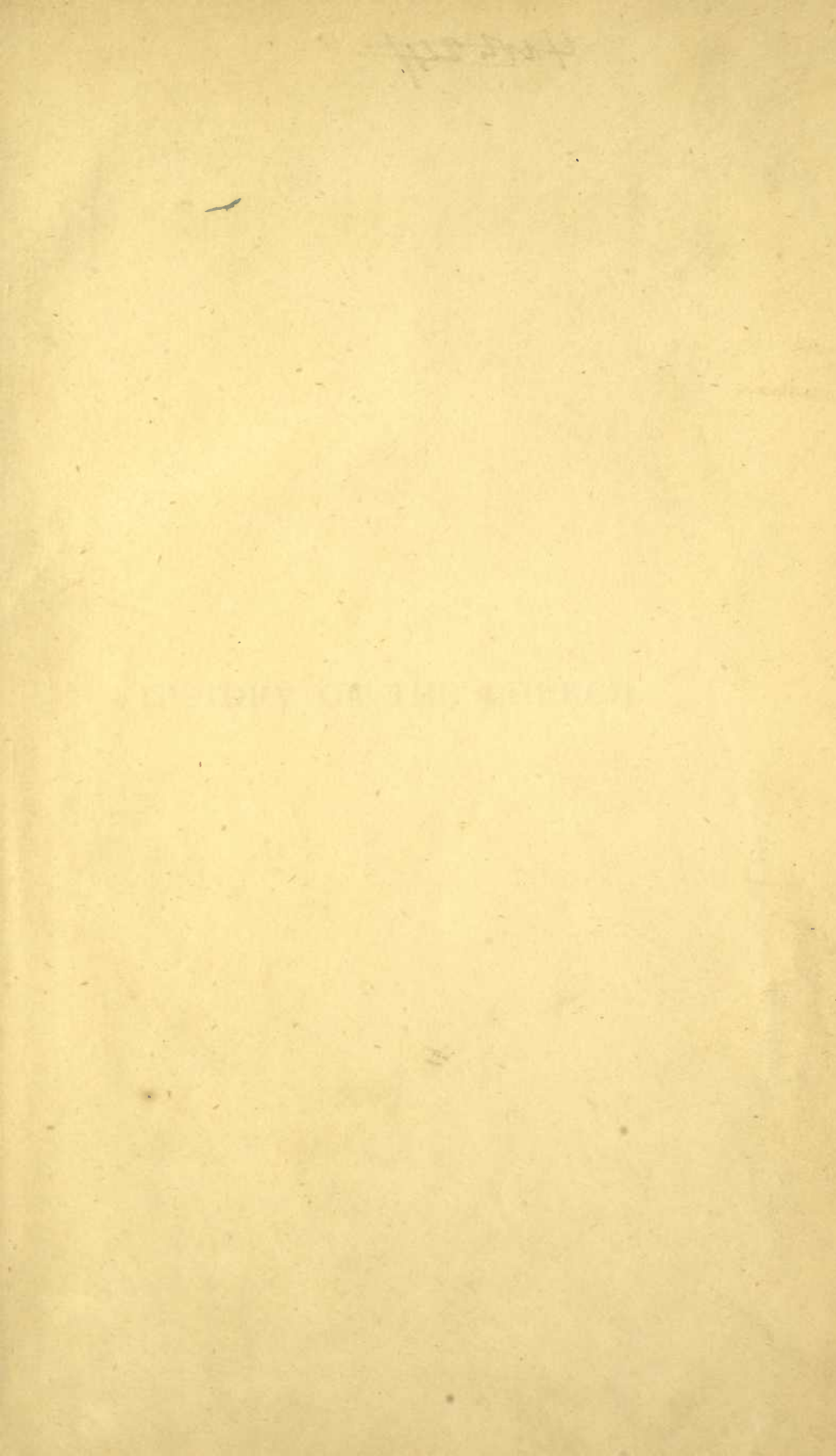




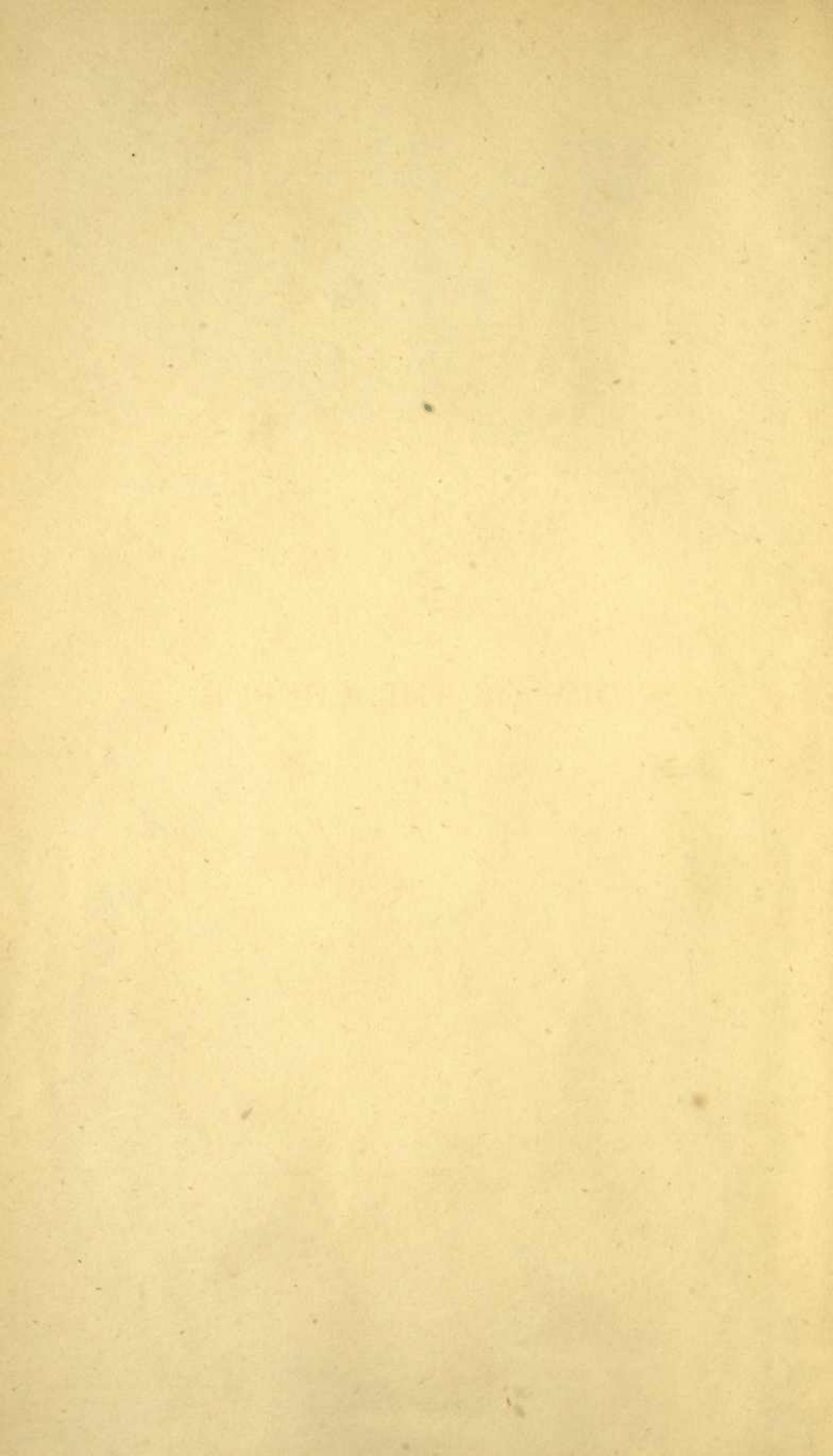
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**HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.**

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# HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

OF THE

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PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY

IN THE ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF MUNICH,

BY THE

REV. EDWARD COX, D.D.

OF ST. EDMUND'S COLLEGE, OLD HALL GREEN, HERTS.

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VOLUME THE FIRST.

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1840.



TO THE  
RIGHT REVEREND THOMAS GRIFFITHS, D.D.

BISHOP OF OLENA AND VICAR APOSTOLIC IN THE  
LONDON DISTRICT,

THIS TRANSLATION  
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,  
AS A TESTIMONY OF MOST PROFOUND RESPECT  
AND OF SINCEREST GRATITUDE,  
BY HIS LORDSHIP'S MOST OBLIGED AND HUMBLE SERVANT,  
THE TRANSLATOR.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE poverty of our national literature, in works of Ecclesiastical History, has long been universally confessed and lamented. But if the history of our country, its civil institutions and its military exploits, be interesting to us, and considered worthy of our study and research,—the history of the kingdom of the Church of Christ, can certainly not be less so to those, whose glory and happiness it is to number themselves amongst its members. Its first beginnings, small as the mustard seed—the rude storms which wept over it, whilst it was yet a tender plant—its growth into the strong and vigorous tree : or, in other words, the institution of the Church, the severe combats which were waged against it, in its first ages, by pagan persecution, by heresy and schism, over all which it gloriously triumphed—because the gates of hell could not prevail against it—are subjects well worthy of the attention and meditation of the Christian.

It is the design of the present translation to remedy, in some degree, the evil of which we may justly complain,—the want of an Ecclesiastical History in our language. This want has been felt the more, as the histories of the Church published in other countries of Europe, are either written in languages not generally understood in England ; or, as it will be seen by the annexed catalogue, are so voluminous, and consequently so expensive, as to be inaccessible to the great majority of readers.

The name of the learned Professor, the author of this history, may stand as its only, its sufficient, recommendation. The works already published by Dr. Döllinger, in the cause of literature and religion, have spread his fame widely through the nations of Europe. It was at his suggestion, and according to his directions, that this translation was commenced. Some years ago, Dr. Döllinger began a history of the Church, which, when completed, will form an extensive work : two parts were published in the years 1833 and 1834. He was then solicited to compile a smaller history, for more general reading. This latter publication is in three volumes. The present translation may be said to be of both works.

The volume now presented to the Public, is translated from the larger history: the three which will succeed it, will, with the exception of the chapters on the introduction of Christianity into Ireland, England, Scotland, and Germany, which are taken from the larger work, be translations of the volumes of the Compendium.

The authorities, the sources of information on the subjects contained in the history, will be found in the margin, at the head of the sections in which the different subjects are treated. Many new and learned works, written on particular points of Ecclesiastical history, by the greatest scholars of the Continent, and but little known amongst us, will be found named amongst the authorities there adduced.





LITERATURE  
OF  
ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.<sup>a</sup>

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THE first work which should be named here, *The Memoirs of Hegesippus*, written in the second century, has been lost, with the exception of a few fragments. The real father of Ecclesiastical History is Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, who, probably a short time before the year 325, completed in ten books his history of the Church, down to the Council of Nice. He has preserved many extracts from works now lost, and, particularly in his first seven books, in which he has done little more than arrange these materials in chronological order, inserting a few additions of his own. His panegyric biography of Constantine, in four books, may be considered as a continuation of his History.<sup>b</sup>

Socrates, *scholasticus* (advocate) at Constantinople, towards the middle of the fifth century, wrote, in a pure, simple style, with scrupulous care, and an unprejudiced judgment, a continuation of Eusebius down to

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<sup>a</sup> C. W. Flügge, *Einleitung in das Studium und die Litteratur der Religions und Kirchengeschichte*. (Introduction to the Study and Literature of the History of Religion and of the Church.) Göttingen, 1801.—C. F. Staüdlin, *Geschichte und Litteratur der Kirchengeschichte*. (History and Literature of Ecclesiastical History), edited after his death, by J. G. Hensen, Hanover, 1827.

<sup>b</sup> Möller, *De Fide Eusebii Cæsariensis*, Hafniæ, 1813. C. A. Kestner, *Comment. de Eusebii Auctoritate et Fide Diplom.* Gött. 1817, 4to.

the year 439. A history of almost the same period (from 323 to 423) was written by Hermias Sozomen, who was a native of Palestine, and, like Socrates, an advocate at Constantinople. Theodoret, bishop of Cyrus, in Syria, the most learned theologian of his age, wrote also, in continuation of Eusebius, a history of the Church, from 322 to 428. None of these three writers appears to have seen the work of the others: each one had his own materials.<sup>a</sup> The Eunomian Philostorgius compiled, as an historical apology of Arianism, a history of the Church from 319 to 423, of which we possess only some extracts, preserved by the patriarch Photius in his *Bibliotheca*.<sup>b</sup> Theodore, lector at Constantinople, drew up a compendium (never printed) of Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret (*Historia Tripartita*), and a continuation of Socrates to the year 518: of this work only some fragments have been preserved by Nicephorus Callisti. The series of ancient Greek ecclesiastical historians was closed by the Syrian Evagrius, whose work, which is beautifully written, but which contains much heterogeneous matter, embraces the period from 431 to 594.<sup>c</sup>

In the west, little was done for Ecclesiastical history. Rufinus, priest of Aquileia, about the year 400, translated (but took great liberties with his original) the History of Eusebius into Latin, and added, in two

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<sup>a</sup> A. J. Holzhausen, De Fontibus, quibus Socrates, Sozomenus, et Theodoretus in scribenda Historia S. usi sunt; Göttingen, 1825.

<sup>b</sup> Philostorgii, Eccl. Historia, edita a J. Gothofredo, cum versione Latina, supplement. et dissert. Genevæ, 1643, 4to.

<sup>c</sup> Eusebii, Socratis, Sozomeni, Theodoreti et Evagrii, item Philostorgii et Theodori Lectoris, quæ exstant, Græ. et Lat. ed. Guil. Reading; Cantabrig. 1720, 3 vols. folio.

books, a continuation down to the year 395.<sup>a</sup> Sulpicius Severus, a priest in Gaul, and a disciple of St. Martin, wrote, in a pure Roman style, a *Sacred History*, which extends to the close of the fourth century, but in which only some of the more important events of Church history are briefly treated.<sup>b</sup> Lastly, Cassiodorus, in the sixth century, completed an accompaniment to the translation of Eusebius by Rufinus; he blended together, in compendium, the narratives of Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, and this *Historia Tripartita* was, together with the work of Rufinus, the source from which the scholars of the west, during the middle ages, drew their knowledge of ancient Ecclesiastical history.<sup>c</sup>

During the thousand years which followed the sixth century, no work of general Ecclesiastical history appeared in the west: there were some special histories of particular nations, such as the works of the Venerable Bede, Flodoard, Adam of Bremen, Ordericus Vitalis, and others. In the east, Nicephorus Callisti was the first Church historian that appeared. In the fourteenth century, he wrote, in eighteen books, (so many at least have been preserved), the history from the time of Christ to the commencement of the seventh century.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, Ecclesiastical history was first treated scientifically, and traced to its most distant sources. This was now made more easy by the printing of the works of the Fathers,

<sup>a</sup> Rufini, Hist. Eccl. ed. P. Th. Cacciari, Romæ, 1740-41, 2 vols. 4to.

<sup>b</sup> Severi Sulpicii, Historia Sacra, edidit Hieron. de Prato; Veron. 1714-44, 2 vols. 4to.

<sup>c</sup> Cassiodori, Historia Tripartita, in ejusd. Opp. ed. Garetius; Rothomag. 1679, 2 vols. folio.



the acts of councils, the collections of epistles, and other writings and records. The great contest, also, which then arose between the Church and Protestantism, awakened the most active industry, and was the cause of the most extensive and deeply-searching examination.

#### I.—CATHOLIC WRITERS.

CÆSAR, afterwards Cardinal, Baronius, a member of the order of the Oratorians, at Rome, at the suggestion of the founder of his order, St. Philip Neri, undertook the compilation of an extensive work, which, for the abundance of its contents, the industry and discrimination of its author, and the many new records which it contained, was for a long time the chief work of its kind, and will always be considered a rich repository of history. His *Ecclesiastical Annals* comprise the first twelve centuries, and first appeared between the years 1588 and 1607. They were continued by the Polish Dominican, Abraham Bzovius, who carried them down to the year 1564: this writer, however, was very inferior to Baronius: a shorter continuation, to 1640, was written by Henry Spondanus, bishop of Pamiers; but the best continuator was Odorich Raynaldus, who wrote with the copiousness and exactness of Baronius, and completed his work as far as the year 1565. To this writer, J. Laderchi joined himself, whose labours, however, in three volumes, did not extend beyond the year 1571. A careful historical, chronological and emendating criticism on the *Annals* of Baronius, was written by the French Franciscan, Anthony Pagi.<sup>a</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> C. Baronii, *Annales Ecclesiastici*; Romæ, 1588-1609, 12 vols. folio. A. Bzovii, *Annales Eccl. post Baronium*; Colon. 1621-40, 8 vols.—

The excellent Godeau, bishop of Vence, first endeavoured to give a popular form to Ecclesiastical history.<sup>a</sup> His work, which is agreeably written, but which is deficient in profound research, was obscured by the work of Claude Fleury. The work of Fleury is a simple and clear narrative, written with care, down to the year 1414. Very inferior is the continuation by the Oratorian Fabre, who by the injudicious selection of his matter, by his prolix narration of facts foreign to his purpose, such as battles and the like, and by his passing over difficulties, betrayed his great incapacity to be the continuator of Fleury.<sup>b</sup>

In the Ecclesiastical History of Noel Alexandre, the narrative is short, and frequently defective: the great value of this learned work, is in the numerous and profound dissertations on important subjects.<sup>c</sup> The extensive compilation of Sebast. Le Nain de Tillemont does not extend beyond the fifth century. It is composed of extracts from ancient writers and records, connected together with great skill: the remarks of the author are distinguished by brackets. He has left in his work

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*Annalium Baronii Continuatio per Spondanum*; Paris, 1640-41, 2 vols. folio.—*Odorici Raynaldi, Annales Eccl. ab anno 1198, ubi Baronius desiit*; Romæ, 1646-77, 10 vols.—*Jac. de Laderchio, Annales Eccl. ab anno 1566, ubi Raynaldus desiit*; Romæ, 1728-37, 3 vols. folio.—*Ant. Pagi, Critica Historico-Chronologica in Annales Baronii*; Antwerp, 1705, 4 vols. folio.—In the great edition by Mansi, (Luccæ, 1738-59, 38 volumes), are included Baronius, Pagi and Raynaldus.

<sup>a</sup> Ant. Godeau, *Histoire de l'Eglise, jusqu'à la fin du neuvième siècle*; Paris, 1663, 3 vols. folio.

<sup>b</sup> Cl. Fleury, *Histoire Ecclésiastique*; Paris, 1691-1720, 20 vols. 4to. continuée par Fabre, 16 vols. 4to.

<sup>c</sup> Natalis Alexandri, *Historia Ecclesiastica*; Parisiis, 1699, 8 vols. folio. Ed. Lucens, 1734, cum notis Const. Roncaglia, 9 vols. folio.

a rich treasure to future historians.<sup>a</sup> The history of the Church, by Fr. Timol. de Choisy, written in his old age, is unpolished, and now almost forgotten.<sup>b</sup> The work of Bonav. Racine, is, in the earlier history, only a compendium of Fleury and Tillemont; and in the more modern parts, principally an apology of Jansenianism.<sup>c</sup> The last author who wrote an Ecclesiastical History in French, was Bérault-Bercastel. His work is not the result of research, but recommends itself by the ease and lightness of its style.<sup>d</sup> The *Christian Ages* of the Canon Ducreux, of Auxerre, are distinguished by correct views and profound judgment.<sup>e</sup>

In Italy, during the course of the last century, there appeared two voluminous works of Ecclesiastical history. The first was by the Dominican, afterwards Cardinal, Orsi: it embraces the first six centuries, and is more ample and more profound than any that had preceded it. The continuation of the same, by Becchetti, which goes down to the year 1585, is a meritorious and useful production.<sup>f</sup> Again an Oratorian entered the path along which Baronius had passed. The *Annals of the Church to the year 1185*, by Gaspar

<sup>a</sup> Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire Ecclésiastique des six premiers Siècles; Paris, 1693; 16 vols. 4to. (It extends down to the year 513).

<sup>b</sup> De Choisy, Histoire de l'Eglise; Paris, 1703; 11 vols. 4to.

<sup>c</sup> Abrégé de l'Histoire Ecclésiastique; Cologne, (Paris) 1762-67; 13 vols. 4to.

<sup>d</sup> Bérault-Bercastel, Histoire de l'Eglise; Paris, 1778; 24 vols. 12mo.

<sup>e</sup> Les Siècles Chrétiens; Paris, 1785; 10 vols. 12mo.

<sup>f</sup> Gius. Agost. Orsi, Storia Ecclesiastica; Roma, 1748-62, 20 vols. 4to. The continuation by Fil. Agost. Becchetti, Roma; 1770; 24 vols. 4to. The last twelve volumes are entitled, "Istoria degli ultimi Quattro Secoli della Chiesa."



Saccarelli, is the best work of its kind. The later volumes, indeed, are not composed with that diligence and care which distinguish the earlier ones.<sup>a</sup>

Catholic Germany first presents us with larger works of Ecclesiastical history, in the present century: one by the Count Fr. Leopold Stolberg;<sup>b</sup> another by Theod. Katerkamp.<sup>c</sup> A third, by Othman von Rauscher, is only in its commencement.<sup>d</sup> The *History of the Christian Religion and Church* is written in another spirit, by N. Locherer.<sup>e</sup> Among the smaller works, those of Dannenmayr, Schmalfus, Ritter, and Ant. Klein, deserve to be named.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Gasp. Saccarelli, *Historia Ecclesiastica, per annos digesta, variisque observationibus illustrata*; Romæ, 1771-1796; 25 vols. 4to.

<sup>b</sup> *Geschichte der Religion Jesu Christi*, von Fr. Leop. Grafen zu Stolberg; Hamburg, 1806-1818; 15 Bde.; continued by Fr. von Kerz; Mainz, 1824; 10 Bde. from 431-755.

<sup>c</sup> Theod. Katerkamp, *Der Kirchengeschichte*, 1te. 2te. 3te. 4te. Abtheilung, 4 Bde.; Munster, 1823-1830, to the year 1073.

<sup>d</sup> Jos. Othm. von Rauscher, *Geschichte der Christlichen Kirche*; Salzburg, 1829; Bde. 1, 2. (The first three centuries).

<sup>e</sup> Ravensburg, 1824-1832: 7 Bde.

<sup>f</sup> Matthiæ Dannenmayr, *Institutiones Hist. Eccl.*; Vien. 1788; 2 vols.—Cosmæ Schmalfus, *Historia Religionis et Ecclesiæ Christi, præcipuè in usum Cleri curam Animarum ruri exercentis*; Pragæ, 1792-93; 6 vols.—Jos. Ignat. Ritter, *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*; Elberfeld, 1826-29; Bd. 1, 2. (To the Reformation).—Ant. Klein, *Historia Eccl. Christ. Grecii*, 1828; 2 vols. There have lately appeared the first volumes of a learned and excellent Manual, by Jac. Ruttenstock, "*Institutiones Historiæ Eccl.*;" Viennæ, 1832-33. The inferior productions of Royko, P. Ph. Wolf, and Michl, which have been consigned to merited oblivion, scarcely need be mentioned: the same may be said of the somewhat better works of Gmeiner, Alber, Molkenbuhr and Klem. Becker.

## II.—PROTESTANT WRITERS.

THE first of these were some disciples of the German Reformers, M. Flacius, J. Wigand, Math. Judex, and others, at Magdeburg. They went down with their vast collection, compiled with polemical views, to the end of the thirteenth century; and so far did they satisfy the desires of their party, that for many years, the idea of composing a new Ecclesiastical history was not entertained.<sup>g</sup> Even the earlier compendiums in Protestant Germany were only epitomes of the work of the Magdeburg Centuriators. A hundred years later, Gottfreid Arnold, gave, by his history of the Church, (which is no more than an apology of nearly every heresy and sect against the Church, of minorities against majorities), a new impulse to greater exertion in the field of history.<sup>h</sup> This work was followed by the history of Weismann, which merits our praise, and is distinguished, in comparison with many others more recent, by its religious feelings.<sup>i</sup> Next came the work of Mosheim of Göttingen, who has cleared up many points of history with great acuteness and penetration, whilst he has thrown others into greater confusion. Amongst those of his own religion, he has obtained general approbation, and the praise of having excelled not only those who preceded, but all

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<sup>g</sup> *Ecclesiastica Historia*....congesta per aliquot studiosos et pios Viros in urbe Magdeburga; Basilæ, 1559-1547; 13 vols. folio.

<sup>h</sup> G. Arnold's *Unparterische Kirchen und Kesserhistorie bis 1688*; Frankf. 1699, 2 bde. folio. The most perfect edition, Schaffhausen, 1740, 3 bde. folio.

<sup>i</sup> Eberh. Weismann, *Introductio in Memorabilia Eccl. Hist.*; Tubing. 1718; Hal. 1745; 2 vols. 4to.



those also who have followed him.<sup>k</sup> At the same time appeared the diligent compilations of J. G. Walch and J. G. Pertsch, but which extended only to the fourth century. After these J. S. Semler of Halle, by his unpleasing, dull method, which is void too of every Christian sentiment, gave the tone to the rationalist mode of treating Ecclesiastical history :<sup>l</sup> in the same spirit, Henke wrote his work, which is now so generally read.<sup>m</sup> About the same time J. M. Schrockh began his voluminous work, which, as it advanced, increased in merit.<sup>n</sup> J. E. C. Schmidt of Giessen, commenced, on a smaller scale, his work, which remains unfinished.<sup>o</sup> Finally, A. Neander undertook, after great preparations, an extensive compilation of Ecclesiastical history, and although he was unable to pass beyond the narrow circle of party ideas, he has greatly surpassed all who went before him.<sup>p</sup>

<sup>k</sup> Laur. Mosheimii, *Institutionum Hist. Eccl. Antiq. et Recentis*, Lib. iv. Helmst. 1755, 4to. In German, by J. Christoph von Einem; Leipz. 1769; 7 bde. and by J. Rud. Schlegel; Heilbronn, 1769, 6 bde.

<sup>l</sup> J. S. Semler, *Historiæ Eccl. selecta capita*; Hal. 1761, 3 vols.—*Versuch eines fruchtbaren Auszugs der K. G.*; Halle, 1773, 3 bde.—*Versuch Christlicher Jahrbücher, oder ausführlicher Tabellen uber der Kirchenhistorie*; Halle, 1783.

<sup>m</sup> H. Phil. Konr. Henke's *Allgemeine Geschichte der Christlichen Kirche*; Braunschweige, 1788. Continuation by J. S. Vater in 2 bden.

<sup>n</sup> J. M. Schrockh, *Christliche Kirchengeschichte*; Leipzig, 1768-1803-35 bde.—*Kirchengeschichte seit der Reformation*; Leipzig, 1804-10. 8 bde. The 9th and 10th are by H. G. Tzschirner.

<sup>o</sup> J. E. Ch. Schmidt's *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*; Giessen, 1801-20, 6 bde. (to the year 1816.)

<sup>p</sup> A. Neander's *Allgemeine Geschichte der Christlichen Religion und Kirche*; Hamburg, 1825, 2 bde. in 6 Abtheile (to the year 590).—*Geschichte der Pflanzung und Leitung der Christlichen Kirche durch die Apostel*. Hamb. 1832-33. Bd. 1, 2.

Shorter compilations and compendiums have been published by Spittler, Munscher, Staudlin, Danz, Gieseler, and Engelhart.

Amongst the followers of Zuinglius and Calvin, no work appeared, for a long time, embracing the whole of Church History. Hottinger of Zurich, in 1655, published a narrative filled with controversy against the Catholic Church.<sup>q</sup> J. Basnage published, under the title of *a History of the Church*, a controversial work, which was occasioned by Bossuet, and which consists only of accounts of particular events.<sup>r</sup> The *Annals* of his relative, Samuel Basnage, extend to 602, and are directed against Baronius.<sup>s</sup> Less polemical is the carefully written work of the Netherland theologian, Herrman Venema.<sup>t</sup> We have shorter histories by Fr. Spanheim, A. Turretin, and E. Jablonski.<sup>u</sup> It is surprising how little has been done by the English in this department of literature: only one work of any extent, and that written in the ideas of the Methodists, has appeared in the English language. It is by Milner. Shorter works have been published by Gregory and the presbyterian Howeis.<sup>v</sup>

<sup>q</sup> J. H. Hottingeri, *Hist. Eccl. N. T.*; Han. et Tiguri, 1655-65, 9 vols.

<sup>r</sup> Jacques Basnage, *Histoire de l'Eglise*; Rotterd. 1699. 2 vols. folio.

<sup>s</sup> Sam. Basnage, *Annales Politico-ecclesiastici*; Roterod. 3 vols. folio.

<sup>t</sup> H. Venema, *Institutiones Historiæ Eccl. N. T.*; Lug. Batav. 1779-83. 5 vols. 4to. (to the end of the 16th century). Two preceding volumes contained the history of the Old Testament.

<sup>u</sup> F. Spanhemii *Hist. Eccl.* in his works; Lug. Batav. 1701.—A. Turretini, *Hist. Eccl. Compendium*; Genev. 1734, ex edit. Jo. Simonis.—P. E. Jablonskii *Institutiones Hist. Christianæ. Pref. et Viadr.* 1783. 2 vols.—A third volume by Stosch and Schickedanz.

<sup>v</sup> J. Milner, *The History of the Church of Christ*, 4 vols.—G. Gregory, *History of the Christian Church*; London, 1794, 2 vols.

# CHRISTIAN CHURCH HISTORY.

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## DIVISION INTO PERIODS.

THE First Period extends to the time of Constantine—to the year 313. The age of the Persecutions. Conflicts with Paganism and Gnosticism.

The Second, to the Sixth General Council, or to the end of the controversies on the Incarnation—313 to 680. Triumph of the Christian Religion over Paganism in the Roman empire. Arianism : Pelagianism : the Nestorian, Monophysitic (Eutychian) and Monothelite Heresies. The beginning of the Church in the new German States. The order of the Benedictines. The origin and rapid progress of Muhammedanism.

The Third, to the Pontificate of Gregory VII—from 680 to 1073. The Iconoclasts. Charlemagne, and the restoration of the Western Empire. Separation of the Greek from the Latin Church.

The Fourth, to the removal of the Papal throne to Avignon, from 1073 to 1305. Disputes on Investitures The Crusades. The Popes at the head of the European Commonwealth. Their contests with the high Civil Power. The Manicheism of the Middle Ages. Scholastic Theology. The Franciscans and Dominicans. Boniface VIII.

The Fifth, to the commencement of Protestantism, from 1305 to 1517. Decline of the Papal temporal Power. The Schism of the West. Wicliffe. Huss, and the Hussites. The synods of Constance and Basil. Temporary Reunion of the Greek and Latin Churches.

The Sixth, to our own times, from 1517 to 1830. Luther, Zuinglius, Calvin. The Self-Reformation of the Church at the Council of Trent, and by the Society of Jesus. Infidelity, in its three branches, of Rationalism, Deism, and Atheism. The French Revolution and its consequences.

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# HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

10125

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## PERIOD THE FIRST.

FROM THE BIRTH OF CHRIST TO THE REIGN OF THE  
EMPEROR CONSTANTINE—A.D. 313.\*

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### CHAPTER FIRST.

#### SECT. I.—POLITICAL CONDITION OF THE JEWS AND ROMANS.

IN the centre of the ancient world, lay the land of Palestine, the birth-place of that renovation of the universe, which was effected by Jesus of Nazareth, and like to which there hath never been another in extent, in duration or in power.

The Jews, before a happy and a powerful people, were no longer governed by princes of their own nation. Amidst its miseries and under all its oppression, Judea had struggled, as late as the heroic ages of the Maccabees, to maintain its freedom and its independence. Simon, the Maccabee, was exalted to the high dignity of Prince of the nation, and left to his son,

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\* The writings of the New Testament; the works of the Fathers of the Church during that period; the fragments of writings collected in Jos. Routh, *Reliquiæ Sacræ, sive auctorum fere jam perditorum, secundi tertiiqæ sæculi, fragmenta quæ supersunt.* Oxonii, 1814-18, 4 vols. 8vo. Theod. Ruinart, *Acta primorum Martyrum sincera et selecta.* Eusebii Ep. Cæsariensis *Historia Eccles. Libri x.* Ed. Paris. 1659.

Joh. Laur. Moshemii, *Commentarii de Rebus Christianorum ante Constantinum Magnum.* Helmst. 1753; Jos. Zola, *De Rebus Christianorum ante Constantinum M.* Ticini, 1780; J. Clerici, *Hist. Eccles. duorum primorum à C. Nat. Sæculorum.* Amstel. 1716.



John Hirkan, an authority unshackled, and protected, by a league with the Romans, against the power of Syria. (B.C. 133.)

The religious differences of the Jews begat political strife. The Pharisees adhered to the people, the Sadducees to the rich and powerful. The former attained so high a superiority under Alexander Jannæus, the younger son of Hirkan, and successor of his brother Aristobulus, that for eight years (from 79 to 71 B.C.) they held the helm of the state, and left to Alexandra, called in Hebrew Salome, the widow of Alexander, the empty title of regent.

The two sons of Alexander and Salome, Hirkan and Aristobulus, contended in arms for the throne, but were persuaded by their treacherous neighbour Antipater, prince of Idumea, to call in the Romans to arbitrate in the quarrel. Pompey the Great came, decided in favour of Hirkan, took possession for him of the capital, and thus undermined the rising edifice of the Jewish freedom. Antipater, who had warmly espoused the cause of Julius Cæsar, was appointed, in the year 48, procurator of Judea, and his son Herod contrived by his flattery and his cunning to obtain from the triumvirate, after the death of Cæsar, the title of king. He was afterwards confirmed in his authority by the emperor Augustus. The Asmonean prince, Antigonus, son of Aristobulus, was condemned by the Romans, at the instigation of Herod, to an unjust death. Thus did the stranger, Herod, surnamed the Great, ascend the throne of Judea. Skilled in the arts of policy, without the fear of God, and deaf to the voice of conscience, he dreaded the Asmonean blood as long as it continued to flow in the veins of a descendant of the ancient Maccean princes. Of this noble race there still survived a daughter of the last Hirkan, named Alexandra (whose daughter, Mariamne, Herod had married), Aristobulus, a brother of Mariamne, and Hirkan, an elder brother of the murdered Antigonus. All these, and his own two sons, born of the unhappy Mariamne, fell, one after another, victims to his cruel policy.

Having won by his flattery the favour and protection of Augustus, the stranger-king ventured to introduce into Judea manners and practices abhorred by every Jew. Theatres, amphitheatres, and games in honour of the emperor ; musicians, jugglers, and combats with wild beasts, formed a part of his regal splendour. At the source of the Jordan he erected a temple to Augustus : and to repress any violence that might spring from the indignation of a people who beheld their religion and their national customs thus insulted, he raised in many parts of the country fortresses defended by strong garrisons. The newly-fortified and enlarged city of Samaria was named Sebaste or Augusta ; and the Tower of Straton, which had been lately extended and defended, received the appellation of Cæsarea. But the true politician can serve God also, when it may answer his designs. Herod rebuilt the temple of Jerusalem in such a manner that the parts removed were immediately replaced, so that the daily sacrifices were never interrupted ; and if we may believe the descriptions of eye-witnesses, there existed not in the universe an edifice that could compare with it in beauty and magnificence.

Rewarded by the world, as far as the world can reward, Herod continued in his course of blood and of fear even to the entrance of the tomb : he feared, at the close of his life, the presence of an infant born of a lowly Jewess maiden in a stable at Bethlehem : he commanded the murder of the infants, and, five days before his death, took away the life of his own son. He died in the seventieth year of his age, two years after the birth of our Redeemer.

The kingdom was divided amongst three of the sons of Herod. Archelaus received the largest portion, which included Judea, Samaria and Idumea. Philip, as tetrarch, possessed a part of Galilee and Trachonitis ; and to Herod Antipas, with the title also of tetrarch, were allotted a part of Galilee, Perea and Iturea. The eldest son of Herod, named Herod Philip, had been disinherited by his father. It was his wife Herodias, who was afterwards married to his brother Herod Antipas.

After many and violent changes in these various governments, the whole territory that had been subject to Herod the Great, fell under the dominion of the Roman Emperors (A.D. 44.) We can except only the small district of Chalchis, which was ruled by Agrippa II.

Under the Idumean princes the Jewish nation sank deep and more deep in its degradation. The Roman governors, who succeeded them, pressed with a cruel hand upon the unhappy people. Some faint glimmerings of the ancient constitution and priestly government might still perhaps be seen, but these were soon to vanish for ever: the oppression and arbitrary rule of the Romans awoke the wild passions of the people, but they burst not forth until Christianity had struck its powerful roots into the Holy Land. Then was the wall which had hitherto separated the nation of God from the nations of the world cast down, that the good tidings of redemption might be borne to the farthest extremities of the earth.

Amongst the Romans, also, liberty existed only in memory. The recollection of what their fathers had once been, was a continual source of mutual hate and internal strife. After many a tyrant, arose Julius Cæsar, exalted by his high birth and already famed for his deeds in war. He sought to assume the name, as well as the power, of king. The dagger of an assassin arrested him in his ambitious career, but it could do no more. Brutus might slay the oppressor: he could not break the chains by which his country was held in bondage.

Octavianus Augustus, the nephew and adopted son of Cæsar, inherited the power of his uncle, as a prince who had succeeded to the throne of his father. Rome, under Augustus, enjoyed tranquillity: for when the contentions for empire had ceased, he laid aside his cruelty and suspicious distrust. His reign counted fifty-seven years from the death of Cæsar, and forty-four from the battle of Actium. His dominion extended over the greater part of Europe: in the East, he possessed Asia Minor, Armenia, Syria, Judea, and Mesopotamia: in



Africa, Egypt, Lybia, the province named Roman Africa, Numidia and Mauritania ;—an empire one thousand miles in length and five hundred in breadth.

In his wars with the Germans, Augustus lost his chosen legions, commanded by Quintilius Varus; but victory at length crowned his arms, and peace reigned through the whole earth. Then was born the Saviour of the world, Jesus Christ, whose birth was announced to men by heralds from Heaven, in that hymn which gave "Glory to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good will."

Claudius Tiberius was the unworthy successor of Augustus. Cruel and haughty, he despised mankind; and the degenerate senate which had sported with the crown of the empire, blushed not to yield to his disgraceful and cruel caprices. In the nineteenth year of his reign, our Lord was crucified at Jerusalem.

The vast empire of Rome was surrounded by formidable neighbours. In the east, from the Euphrates to the Oxus, the Parthians stood on the confines in a posture of defiance. In the north there existed poor but warlike nations, united against the common foe, and watching with jealousy every encroachment upon their independance. Attacked and oftentimes defeated, but never subdued, they strengthened in their might, and became at length the destroyers that broke down the Colossus of the Roman power.

This may suffice to present an idea of the political state of the world, when the apostles went forth to subject it to Him who sent them. The greater part of the known world formed at this period only one empire, which was fast approaching indeed to dismemberment.

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## SECTION II.

STATE OF RELIGION AND MORALS AMONG THE JEWS  
AND OTHER NATIONS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

OPPRESSED and subdued by their conquerors, the Jews held in the deepest abhorrence all that was not Jewish: their nationality became more intimately blended with their religious belief, and their aversion to receive the founder of a religion, that should burst the narrow limits of Judea, to flow unto all the nations of the earth, had arisen to its greatest height. They adhered with persevering obstinacy to the letter of their law, whilst at the same time they fell into a deep degeneracy of morality. Their only desire was freedom from their political captivity: they looked for a Messias who would liberate them from the thraldom of the Romans, and who would again erect in Judea a new and powerful kingdom. They therefore despised Him, who came to them "in the form of a servant" to free them from the yoke of their sins.

An indisputable evidence of the state of religion among the Jews, may be drawn from the many sects which had arisen in the nation and which had been the cause of many a deadly strife. The Pharisees governed the people: they proclaimed themselves the defenders of the law, the guardians of its purity, although they scrupled not to corrupt it by their own traditions. Repeated purifications, long-continued fasts, and a zeal for the observance of the Sabbath, formed the essence of their religion: their hypocritical display of devotion, void of all interior spirit of love either of God or of their neighbour, drew down upon them the frequent and severe reproaches of the Redeemer. The Saducees, on the contrary, whose sect was composed chiefly of the noble and wealthy, were professed Deists: they denied the existence of angels, the immortality of the soul (consequently the resurrection of the body), the



future judgment, and all influence of the Deity upon the actions of men. The Esseans, separated from the rest of the nation, inhabited the shores of the Dead Sea; living in community and in a state of celibacy, in the strict observance of the Sabbaths, far removed from the profanations of their invaders, but taking no part in the sacrifices of the Temple. The Therapeuti of Egypt, described by Philo, were a branch of the Esseans, differing from them in this, that they devoted themselves to a life of exclusive contemplation, while their brethren of Palestine joined labour with their prayer. In Egypt, particularly at Alexandria, there were schools of learned Jews, of whom Philo was the chief, who united the Platonic philosophy with their allegorical and extravagant interpretations of the Old Testament. The Samaritans were a mixed people, descended from the Israelites who had been left in their country by the Assyrian conquerors, and from the heathens who occupied the places of those who had been carried into captivity: they possessed a temple, upon mount Garizin, and a priesthood independant of the Jewish order. A mutual and an unrelenting spirit of hatred had long separated them from the Jews. Beyond Judea, in almost every part of the Roman empire, there existed small communities of Jews, bound to their beloved Jerusalem, by their frequent tributes to the temple and by their pilgrimages to the holy city. The constant intercourse of these Jews, who lived, in the dispersion, (*εν διασπορα*) with their pagan neighbours, caused the conversion of many of these, who sought for more consolation in religion than their own could give. Some followed the whole ceremonial of the Mosaic law, and were called proselytes of justice; others took no part in the ceremonial, but adopted only the faith and the hopes of the ancient covenant.

These various and contending sects of the Jewish religion were a manifest indication of its approaching dissolution: they were favourable also to the expansion of Christianity. Man, in general, cannot exist without a religion, any more than religion can exist without a form.

All were dissatisfied with idolatry, as all were united in their expectation of a Redeemer at this period. When therefore the last of the Prophets, the first of the Evangelists, appeared and exclaimed, "Do penance, for the kingdom of God is near!" he spoke to attentive hearers and to hearts filled with desire.

When the Son of God came in our human nature into the world, the deep night of idolatry was spread over all the nations and people of the earth. Judea was the only star of brightness in this universal gloom. The religions of paganism possessed a particular, a national character, and were therefore subjected to a political form of constitution: the state was intimately connected with the religious government, as anciently in Egypt, India and Persia: or religion was essentially combined with the state and was employed as the surest means for the stability and preservation of the civil power. Each nation adored its own Gods, and according to its own customs; not, however, to obtain present or future spiritual blessings, but to partake more abundantly of the riches and pleasures of this earth. The Deities of paganism were formed by the apotheosis of nature, of celebrated men, and by the personification of ethical ideas: they were represented and honoured as beings subjected to human thoughts and sensations, and possessing human virtues and vices. The greatest follies and crimes were consequently attributed by men to the inspiration of a God.

The faith of men in an all-wise and all-ruling Providence had become darkened: they believed in an inevitable Fate, to which and to Fortune they ascribed the course of human events. The cold faith of idolatry beheld, in the misfortunes and in the passions of men, the iniquity or the revenge of an offended Deity, sometimes the blinded impulse of accident or destiny. The worship of the Gods sprung not from any interior spirit of piety: no religious instruction accompanied it: it was no more than a display of external, frivolous, and oftentimes superstitious forms, connected not unfrequently with cruelty and crime. Magic and divination,

incantations of the dead, and invocations of evil spirits, were in constant and general use. Purifications from defilements and from crimes of cruelty were performed by washings or by the sprinkling of water, by the sacrifice of animals or by the horrifying criobolia or taurobolia. A change of life or a detestation of vice was seldom imagined. Weak and confused, scarcely acknowledged by religion, certainly not sanctified by it, were the doctrines of the existence of man and of his condition in a future life. Among the people, the idea of retribution for works good or evil, was in nowise or only slightly connected with their opinions of a life beyond the tomb: of the learned, many,—perhaps the greater number,—had persuaded themselves that, with his body, the existence of man fell into annihilation.

The influence of such a religion upon the morals of the people could not be favourable to virtue; it was often most pernicious. The higher classes of society sought for that which their religion could not afford them—nourishment for their souls—in the schools of the Greek philosophers, which had spread over nearly the whole of the Roman empire. These schools were in more or less direct opposition to the religious opinions of the people, without however approaching nearer to the truth: their doctrines of the Deity and of morality were filled with contradictions and with the grossest errors. They wavered in their belief of the indivisible essence of the Divine nature: by confessing that matter could not have been self-existent, they acknowledged the creating power of God, whilst they denied or limited his pervading providence. They denied also, or doubted, the immortality of the human soul, or united it with their pantheistic faith of eternal preexistence. No better were the principles of morality taught in these heathen philosophic schools: pleasure was the ruling doctrine of the Epicureans: the boundless pride of the Stoics promised to raise man to impassibility and to an equality with the Gods: the scepticism of the Academy formed of the plainest questions of morality subjects of interminable disputes. But at the time of which we are now



speaking, paganism also possessed its “men of desires,”\*—men who, dissatisfied with the religion of their ancestors, which was void of every consoling and ennobling feeling, sighed for other and better things. Innocent, and untainted by the pestiferous breath of universal crime, they were the chosen ones to whom the heralds of faith were especially sent, and who received the tidings of salvation with joy. As hitherto they had pierced through the doctrines and worship of paganism, seeking truth, the only good, so now did they confess that in the religion of Jesus they found the end of their being and of their hopes. No longer could they resist the powerful impulse of their hearts, nor longer delay to become fervent professors of the Christian faith.

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### SECTION III.

#### THE INCARNATION OF OUR REDEEMER JESUS CHRIST —ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST—BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH.

THE incarnation of our Divine Redeemer in the womb of his Virgin mother, was effected by the power of the Holy Ghost. In what year or upon what day the Saviour was born into this world cannot now be determined. The most probable opinion is, that the nativity of our Lord should be placed four years beyond our present computation. This however is certain, that in the reign of the emperor Augustus, and of Herod the Great, king of Judea, “the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us.”

Mary, the virgin who gave birth to Jesus, and Joseph, to whom she had been espoused, were both of the royal house of David, and, if not poor, certainly not living in affluence. Scarcely had our Lord been born, when he showed that he came not to reign amidst earthly wealth and magnificence, although he were He to whom every

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\* Daniel x. 11, 19.



knee should bend. For when God "bringeth his first begotten into the world he saith, 'And let all the angels of God adore him.'" (Heb. i. 6.)

This happy event was first announced to shepherds, who were keeping their night-watches at Bethlehem, and to them, the poor, the gospel was first preached. From the poor also were they chosen who were sent forth to bear to the nations the tidings of salvation; that all, who had eyes to see, might see that God chooses the weak ones of this world for his mighty works, and that not from human prudence or human labour, but from Him, comes all wisdom, all power, and all grace.

According to the Mosaic law, the divine infant was circumcised on the eighth day after birth, and was named Jesus. And when the days of purification were ended, and his mother appeared in the temple with her son, a venerable and devout man, named Simeon, prophesied that he should be placed for the resurrection of many, and as a sign to be contradicted. Then came kings from distant lands in the east, and inquired in Jerusalem for the new-born King of the Jews. Here-upon Herod trembled, and all Jerusalem with him, and he resolved upon a wicked means of freeing himself from his fear,—upon the murder of the innocents. All the male children of two years of age and under, in Bethlehem and around it, were slain. But Jesus was taken, by the command of God, into Egypt, where he remained until the death of the tyrant. After this event, he and his mother were conducted by Joseph again into the land of Israel, where they resided in domestic retirement, and where "the child grew in wisdom, in age, and in grace, before God and men."

That this wisdom was not acquired or learnt in the schools of the Jewish masters, but drawn from the highest and purest of heaven's founts, Jesus gave proof, when, in the twelfth year of his age, he stood in the temple of Jerusalem, and filled the minds of all around him with wonder at his knowledge and at his answers. From this time until his entrance upon his mission, the sacred history speaks no more of him, and it is vain to

endeavour to fill up the interval with conjectures that can serve no purpose. The Talmudists have invented fables which say, that “ he dwelt in Egypt, and there learned to perform his miracles ; that he stole from the temple the secret and mysterious name of God, the *Shem ham phorash*, and wrought many wonders with this talisman.” These impious accusations arose early among the Jews, probably soon after the destruction of Jerusalem : from them they were borrowed by the pagans, some of whom, as Celsus, employed them as arms in their attacks upon Christianity. The true origin of them was, that Jesus wrought miracles which even his bitterest enemies could not deny, and which they endeavoured to lessen by ascribing them to magic, or to the abused name of God.

In the thirtieth year of his age, Jesus appeared amongst the Jews as the teacher and author of the Christian religion. In the meantime, John, the son of the priest Zacchary, whose birth and life had been most wonderful, came forth from his wilderness. This man, who, according to the declaration of the Most Wise, was the greatest of those who had been born of women, stood as the medium-point between the new and the old Testaments, and as a necessary link in the chain of Divine revelation. Rejecting the proffered honour of being reputed Elias or even the Messias, he proclaimed aloud, with a voice from the wilderness, that the kingdom of the Messias was at hand,—that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Redeemer,—that his kingdom was not national nor of this earth. Our Lord, before the commencement of his teaching, was baptized by John, in the Jordan. His eternal Father then spoke ; and whilst John, as man, bore testimony to his Divine mission, the Almighty God witnessed it by miracles from heaven. At this period, Tiberius was emperor of Rome ; Pontius Pilate governor of Judea ; Herod Antipas tetrarch of Galilee and Perea ; and Philip, his brother, tetrarch of Idumea, Trachonitis, and Abilene.

As the sun arose, the star of morning descended. John the Baptist, whose sacred character every Christian

has learned to admire, even from the few traits by which it has been portrayed in the gospels, had been cast into prison by Herod Antipas. This prince had taken from his brother, Philip, his wife Herodias, who consented to live a life of public iniquity. The precursor of the Messias boldly reproached Herod with the enormity of his scandal. He was cast into prison ; but Herod would not put him to death, for he feared the people, by whom John was revered as a prophet. The wicked Herodias did not fear, and on the birth-day of the tetrarch, she obtained an order for his decapitation, and to have presented to her the head of the holy man on a dish. Thus died the Baptist, after he had beheld the beginning of the public life of Jesus, his wonderful works, and the consoling fruits of his own exalted mission.

We must suppose the history of our blessed Redeemer to be sufficiently known by all. Avoiding all earthly splendour and worldly comforts, followed by a few chosen friends, unknown and persecuted by the rich and the noble as by the lowest of the people, he spent three years in acts of heavenly benevolence, and in imparting heavenly truths to men. He taught the reconciliation of man with God, through faith and love, founded upon humility ; for those who love honours cannot believe in him. He has himself left us a brief history of his life, in these words (Matt. xi. 5) : “ The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who shall not be scandalized in me.” And when the bitterness of his enemies had reached its highest point, he went with gladness to meet the sufferings that brought redemption and salvation to man. It is a just observation, but one which redounds not to our honour, that men oftentimes love that which is evil and wicked, and that which is honourable and virtuous they will hardly believe of each other. Thus the enemies of the Most Holy found believers and followers,—and he was despised, blasphemed, and murdered. A mind and a life opposed to the thoughts and ways of the earth, must necessarily



have come in violent conflict with the world. "He was in the world, and the world knew him not: he came unto his own, and his own did not receive him." There were a few who followed him, but in timidity and fear: the powerful, on the contrary, and the many, incited by the interpreters of the law, by the priests and the Pharisees, rose up against him, and sought his death.

He knew and foretold his sufferings. One of the chosen twelve was seduced to betray his master, who, bound as a criminal, was led away to the tribunal of the high-priest. When solemnly abjured to confess if he were the Son of God, he answered, "I am." Then did the assembled priests and scribes, and members of the council, condemn him as guilty of blasphemy, and worthy of death. From the Jewish court, which had lost, under the Romans, the power of inflicting death, he was borne away to the governor Pilate, who, after severe scorn and severer chastisements, condemned the acknowledged innocent and just man to death. He died, in the thirty-third year of his life upon earth, derided by the Romans and Jews, the most disgraceful death of the cross, and between two thieves. His bones were not broken,—the ordinary usage after such a death; but, to prove that he was dead, a soldier opened his side with a spear. The body was buried in honour by a disciple: a guard was placed around the tomb, and a seal upon the stone.

On the third day he appeared again in life to his apostles. The truth of his religion could not be weakened by his violent and cruel death, but the rather confirmed; and the end of his incarnation—the redemption and reconciliation of man with God—promoted. He remained forty days with his disciples, instructing them in the nature of his kingdom, their sacred duties, and future labours. There is nothing, however, expressed in the gospel, more than the general command to teach, to baptize, and to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them. Of those who believed in him, Jesus had chosen twelve, whom he admitted as the favoured witnesses of his words and works. These,



with the exception of the betrayer, he left as his representatives on earth. There were also seventy-two disciples closely connected with him; they, also, after his ascension, preached the gospel, but with less ample powers than the apostles. All these, or many of them ("They who were come together,"—Acts i. 6), assembled with Jesus, near Bethania, at the end of the forty days; and whilst they looked upon him, he raised his hands and blessed them, and was borne away into heaven.\*

The work of redemption had been consummated: the Son of God had returned to his throne in heaven, after he had left to his apostles the command to preach the gospel to every creature. For this vast undertaking they required greater strength and illumination—the gifts of the Holy Ghost, to await whose descent they remained at Jerusalem, as they had been directed by their Lord. In the meantime, they performed nothing except the election of another apostle, Matthias, in the place of him who had prevaricated. On the festival day, on which the giving of the Old Law on Mount Sinai was celebrated, the perfection of the New Covenant in the Christian Church was effected. The Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles and assembled disciples in the form of fiery tongues, and imparted itself to the new-born Church that was then collected in one place. Henceforth it continued as the living soul inseparably infused into the body of the Church,—preserving it in unity of faith and of love. Its influence upon the apostles soon became visible: weak as they were before in faith, doubtful and timorous, they now displayed minds full of faith and of understanding, fervent, courageous, and undaunted, which not even the threat of death could subdue. The festival had drawn to Jerusalem Jews and proselytes from every nation of the earth. These, Parthians and Medes, —inhabitants of Mesopotamia, and of the provinces of Asia,—Jews from Egypt, Rome, and Lybia,—Cretes and Arabians, stood in astonishment when they heard, in their own languages,

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\* Writings of the New Testament.

the wonderful things of God spoken by the apostles ; and so powerful was the effect of the inspired word of God, coming from the mouth of Peter, that in one day three thousand converts added themselves to the Church. Many of these, returning to their native lands, bore with them the seeds of the divine word, so that the apostles, when they went from Jerusalem to preach to the whole world, found in many places the way opened before them. The cure of the lame man in the portico of the temple, and the discourse addressed to the wondering multitudes, by St. Peter, increased the number of believers to five thousand. But the princes of the Jews could no longer remain silent : the priests and Saducees, enraged by the intelligence of our Lord's resurrection, hastened to the temple, seized Peter and John, cast them into prison, and on the following day placed them before their tribunal. When the prince of the apostles spoke to the council, proving the necessity of believing in Him whom they had crucified, his accusers could do no more than dismiss him, with a severe prohibition of again teaching in the name of Christ. " Judge ye, if it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God," was the generous answer of the disciple of Christ.

The first fervour of faith and of love was so strong among the faithful in the mother-church, that not only did they live as one family, but the rich brought their treasures to the apostles to be by them applied to the necessities of the poor. This community of goods, however, did not extend to an entire deprivation of property : it was not imposed as a duty, nor did it extend to other Churches. But when Ananias and Saphira had endeavoured to deceive the apostle, by retaining, with a lie, a part of the price of their land, the punishment inflicted by St. Peter upon them, taught the assembly that the guilty ones had lied not to man, but to God. The faithful were wont to meet in private dwellings to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice, and to receive the body of the Lord (" They continued in the breaking of bread" ) ; but they frequented the temple also, and

joined in the daily prayers and sacrifices : externally they lived as Jews, observing the ceremonies of the Mosaic law, although these had become of no avail, as the Gospel dispensation had entered into their place. It was yet a time of expectation and transition ; the Jewish Church had not lost the authority that had been imparted to it by the Almighty ; the synagogue still possessed the chair of Moses, the power of which had been recognized by our Lord. The new-born Church had to acquire form and strength by the accession of multitudes of the Gentiles : when this came to pass, and when the synagogue had filled the measure of its iniquity, by its voluntary and obstinate blindness to the increasing light of Heaven, then the destruction of Jerusalem and of its temple,—the annihilation of the Jewish state, and the dispersion of the people,—marked the time for the entire rejection of the synagogue, and of the consequent and exclusive erection of the Church of Jesus Christ.

The complaints of the Greeks (converted Jews from the Greek provinces) that the widows of their nation had been neglected in the distribution of alms, was the immediate cause of the ordination of the seven Deacons. The community elected them and the apostles ordained them, and entrusted to them the care of the widows and of the poor. These first assistants of the apostles were men filled with the Holy Ghost, and called also to a higher office than the ministering to tables—to the preaching of the Gospel. So widely had the religion of Jesus extended, that many of the Jewish priests had entered within it: the others burned with rage against it. Stephen, the first of the deacons, was marked as the victim of their fury. He was accused of blasphemy, and died praying for those who stoned him to death,—the first in the host of white-robed martyrs. The persecution which followed, caused many of the faithful to leave Jerusalem, who made known their faith not only in Palestine and Samaria, but also in Syria, Phœnicia and Cyprus. The deacon Philip, by his preachings, converted many in Samaria upon whom the



apostles Peter and John laid their hands, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. A nobleman of the kingdom of Ethiopia, a pagan proselyte of the Gate, returning from Jerusalem, was baptized by Philip; and according to the testimonies of Irenæus and Eusebius, founded the Church of Ethiopia.

Among the persecutors of the followers of Jesus, there was one more than all others conspicuous by the perseverance and cruelty of his zeal;—a young man, named Saul, from Tarsus in Cilicia, born of Jewish parents of the tribe of Benjamin, and who was by birth a Roman citizen. He was a scholar of the learned Gamaliel, and had been carefully educated in the doctrines of the Pharisees. And now that the Pharisees and Saducees were united in common enmity against the Church, he entered the houses of the faithful, and bore away men and women to prison: he caused some to fall away and delivered those who remained constant to death. He had before consented to the condemnation of the holy martyr Stephen. To arrest the progress of the new religion beyond the walls of Jerusalem, he had obtained letters from the princes of the council to the elders of the synagogues in Palestine and Syria, with powers to seize the followers of Christ, and to convey them in chains to the capital. But even this man had the Lord chosen as the most noble instrument by which his faith should be spread amongst the Gentiles. He was on his way to Damascus, when a bright streaming light fell suddenly around him: blinded, he fell to the ground, and heard these words spoken to him, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” “Who art thou, Lord?” “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.” He went to Damascus, where he was told what he should do. He continued there, blind, without food or drink for three days: but the blindness of his soul had been healed. The disciple Ananias was sent to him by the Lord, declared to him his high vocation, baptised him, and restored to him his sight. In Damascus, where his zeal was to have burned against the followers of Jesus, he began immediately to preach and to proclaim that Jesus was indeed the son of God. Thence



he retired into Arabia Petrea, either to preach to the Jews residing there, or to prepare himself in solitude for his apostolic labours. After three years, he returned to Damascus, but was compelled to protect himself under the shadows of the night, while he withdrew from the fury of the Jews who sought his life. Then, for the first time since his conversion, he returned to Jerusalem, where he was received with some degree of distrust by the faithful, to whom his conversion, or the attending circumstances, appear to have been unknown. He was conducted to Peter and to James the Less by Barnabas. Fearless he announced the name of Jesus in the synagogues; but was again compelled to avoid by flight the mortal hate of his adversaries, and visited his native city, Tarsus.

But now the hour had come, in which the portals of the Church, open hitherto only to the Jews, were to be thrown wide for the entrance also of the Gentiles. Peter, after the cessation of the persecution, had travelled through Palestine, to form, strengthen and enlarge the rising Churches. At Joppe, he had restored life to the deceased Tabitha, and had learned by a vision from Heaven no longer to call unclean that which God had purified. At the same time, the devout centurion, Cornelius, at Cæsarea, had been admonished by God to send to Joppe, for the Apostle. Peter came and announced to the centurion and his friends the gospel of Jesus; and whilst he was speaking the Almighty imparted to his Gentile hearers the gifts of the Holy Spirit, so that they began immediately to speak in tongues which they had never learned. The apostle hesitated not to baptize those whom the Lord had thus visibly called into his Church. It required indeed a visible interposition of the Divine will, to break down the wall of division which had hitherto separated the Jews from the rest of mankind, and to reconcile the converted Jews to the thought that it was lawful to admit the pagans into the Church even though they had not passed through a state of probation as Jewish proselytes. At his return to Jerusalem, Peter had to

justify himself for this proceeding, by a narration of the wonders that had befallen him at Cæsarea. As the Church at Jerusalem was composed exclusively of Jewish Christians, it was necessary to form another, which might be to the pagan converts, what Jerusalem was to the faithful of Judea, Galilee and Samaria. The foundations of such a mother-church had been already laid at Antioch, the capital city of the Roman empire in the East, by persons from Cyprus and Cyrene, who had preached the faith and converted many. When this intelligence was conveyed to the apostles, they sent Barnabas, one of their assistants, to direct and consolidate the new community. He was a Levite from Cyprus, and had before been called Joseph: he received the appellation of Barnabas, or son of a Prophet, from the apostles. Barnabas took with him Saul from Tarsus, and so greatly were the labours of these two new apostles blessed, that within the space of a year (A.D. 42) the Church of Antioch numbered so many members, that the followers of Christ were there first named Christians. The Latin termination of this word must lead us to conclude that it was first employed by the Roman inhabitants of Antioch. Peter afterwards took to himself the direction of this Church, and was thus the founder of the see of Antioch, which, before he went to Rome, he resigned to Evodius.\*

A new persecution was raised against the Church by Herod Agrippa, to whom the emperor Claudius had given the title and power of king of Judea. As a zealous Jew, and to please the people, he put to death James, the brother of John, and cast Peter into prison under the care of a strong guard. But the head of the

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\* The silence of St. Luke, who passes over so many things in his Acts of the Apostles, ought not to be opposed to the positive testimonies of Origen, Eusebius, SS. Jerome, J. Chrysostom, and Innocent I. If Eusebius in one place calls Evodius the first bishop of Antioch, he says in another (H. E. iii. 36), that Ignatius was the second in succession from St. Peter in that see. That St. Peter was for some time at Antioch, is certain, from Galatians ii. 11. How long he remained cannot be determined; some of the Fathers say seven years.

Church, for whom the faithful offered to Heaven unceasing prayers, was freed from his dungeon by an angel before the day on which he was to be brought before the people, and to be conducted to martyrdom. He left Jerusalem, and the subsequent death of Herod (Acts xii. 23) terminated the persecution. Saul and Barnabas came from Antioch with alms for the assistance of those who were suffering from the famine, which had been foretold by the Christian prophet, Agabus.

Soon after the death of Agrippa, the final separation of the apostles, to bear, in obedience to their Lord's command, the gospel to the whole world, seems to have taken place. According to an ancient and credible tradition,\* our Saviour Christ directed them to remain in Jerusalem and Judea for the space of twelve years, before they departed for that mission to which he had ordained them. These years being past, they separated, never again to meet upon this earth. The succeeding history of the greater number is veiled in obscurity. After this period, St. Luke confines himself to the actions of St. Paul. We have authentic information only of Peter, James, and John; and must content ourselves with brief, often doubtful, notices of the others. Andrew, the brother of Peter, preached in the north of Asia Minor, and in Scythia, (the countries bordering the Black Sea), and suffered death, by crucifixion, at Patra in Achaia. Philip died at Hierapolis in Phrygia, at a very advanced age. Bartholomew laboured in India, probably Ethiopia, and was crowned with a glorious but cruel martyrdom. It is said, that Pantanus of Alexandria, following a century later in the course of St. Bartholomew, found amongst the Christians a Hebrew copy of the gospel of St. Matthew, which the apostle had left there. St. Thomas carried the faith to the Parthians, among whom there were many Jews, and penetrated into the East Indies, where he preached and laboured

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\* See Euseb. Hist. Ec. v. 18; Clemens Alex. Strom. vi. 5, cites the same, from an apocryphal, but very ancient book, "The Preachings of Peter." Μετα δωδεκα ἔτη, ἐξέλθετε εἰς τὸν κόσμον, μητις εἴπη, οὐκ ἤκουσαμεν.



for the conversion of the natives, amidst many sufferings, and with great success. Judas Thaddeus planted Christianity in Syria, Arabia, Mesopotamia, and lastly in Persia. Of him, however, as of Simon and Matthias, we have only the accounts of late and inconsiderable writers.

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## SECTION IV.

TRAVELS OF ST. PAUL—MARTYRDOM OF SS. PETER AND PAUL AT ROME—JAMES, BISHOP OF JERUSALEM—ST. JOHN.

SOON after the return of Saul and Barnabas to Antioch, the elders of that Church were admonished by the Holy Ghost, to separate them “for the work whereunto he had taken them.” This was done by the imposition of hands, accompanied by fasting and prayer. Hence St. Paul, at a later period, declares that he was chosen not by men, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father. (Galatians i. 1.) They immediately commenced their mission, accompanied by John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas, and preached the faith of the gospel in Salamis and Cyprus, in the Jewish synagogues. Saul was called by the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, to Paphos, where he struck the magician, Elymas, with blindness, and converted the proconsul to the faith. From this period, St. Luke always calls the apostle, Paul, because, as St. Jerome says, he took this name from the newly converted proconsul. It was, indeed, customary with the Jews, who resided amongst the heathens, to change their names for others similar in sound, or for the Greek or Latin translation of the original appellation.\* The apostle seems to have conformed to this practice, that he

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\* Thus we have Dositheus for Dosthai; Jason for Jesus; Trypho for Tarphon; Silvanus, in the epistles of St. Paul, for Silas, as he is named by St. Luke in the Acts; Menelaus for Onias; Pollio for Hillel; Alchimus for Joachim.



might obtain more easy access to the Gentiles. From Paphos, the heralds of the gospel returned to the Asiatic continent: passing through Perge in Pamphilia, where Mark left them, they came to Antioch in Pisidia. Here and at Iconium they converted many Jews and Pagans, but were contradicted and interrupted by the Jewish zealots. At Lystra, the miraculous cure of a lame man by Paul, gained divine honours for him and Barnabas. But the same people who were ready to sacrifice to them as to Jupiter and Mercury, in a short time, being incited by the Jews, stoned Paul, and dragged him from the city thinking that he was dead. On the following day, he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. They returned, however, not long after, and passing through Antioch in Pisidia, and Iconium, and placing bishops in these new Churches, they sailed for Antioch in Syria. (A. D. 45-50.)

St. Paul had been called to the apostleship in a miraculous manner, and had received by immediate revelation that enlightenment of mind which was required for his sacred vocation. But that the manner of his teaching and instructions might conform exactly with that of the other apostles, he went to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and his convert Titus, in the fourteenth year after his conversion, to consult with those "pillars of the Church," Peter, James, and John. The question, whether the Mosaic Law still bound the Christians had already caused great excitement in the infant Church. Nothing could be more difficult for the Jews, and for those in particular who at Jerusalem lived under the shadow of the temple, and daily beheld its sacrifices, than to renounce the deep-rooted persuasion, which had grown with all their ideas, that the entire observance of the law was the only means of justification before God, and of future happiness. They imagined that even the converted Gentiles could not become true disciples of Christ, unless they had been first circumcised. St. Paul, therefore, was compelled to circumcise his companion, Titus, to gain for him admission amongst the faithful. But he resisted these doctrines, and received the support of the three apostles. He and Barnabas were acknowledged

by them as worthy partners in the mission, and were sent to labour for the conversion of the nations, while Peter, James, and John, remained to instruct the Jews. Soon after the return of Paul and Barnabas to Antioch, Peter came there, and hesitated not to eat with the uncircumcised, until the arrival of certain Jewish converts from Jerusalem. Not to scandalize these zealots for the law, who considered the uncircumcised and their meats unclean, he, the apostle of the Jews, withdrew from their society, and caused Barnabas and others to follow him. St. Paul resisted him, and blamed his proceeding. So great, however, was the anxiety occasioned at Antioch, by the arrival of other Jews from Jerusalem, that the Christians resolved to send Paul and Barnabas to confer with the apostles. A council was, therefore, held by the five apostles, Peter, James, and John, Paul and Barnabas, and the ancients of the Church. After Peter and James had spoken to the assembly, it was determined, it seeming good to the Holy Ghost, and to them, the apostles, and the ancients, to lay no farther burden upon the brethren of the Gentiles, than these necessary things, "To abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication." The command to abstain from things strangled, and from blood, was not found in the law of Moses, but as it was considered by the Jews a Divine prohibition extending to all mankind, it was retained for the present, not to prevent the communication of the converted Jews and Gentiles. The determination of the council was addressed to the Churches in Syria and Cilicia. Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, accompanied by Judas Barsabas, and Silas, two of the chief men of the Church in Jerusalem.

Soon after, in the year 53, Paul commenced his second journey, in company of Silas. Barnabas had separated from him, on account of his nephew Mark, whom Paul did not wish to take with him. At Lystra he associated with himself and Silas, the young Timothy, the son of a Greek father, and of a Jewess Christian mother. At the desire of the apostle, and to gain for him admission into

the society of the new converts, he had been circumcised. The three preachers passed through Phrygia, Galatia, and Mysia: at Troas, they were joined by Luke the Evangelist, and here St. Paul was admonished, in a dream, to leave Asia, and to pass over to Macedon. At Philippi, his miraculous deliverance from prison, into which he had been cast, after having been scourged, as a disturber of the public peace, wrought the conversion of the jailor and of his whole family. After many fruitful labours, and many persecutions from the Jews, he sailed with Silas and Timothy to Athens. Into this strong hold of paganism, the centre of heathen wisdom and art, in which the eye, wherever it turned, met temples, statues, and sacrifices to the Gods; into this city, the inhabitants of which claimed for themselves the fame of superior religion over all antiquity, now for the first time entered those doctrines which were a scandal to the Jew, and foolishness to the Gentile. Where shall the apostle begin to seize the attention of these light-minded and proud Greeks? The nameless altar to the UNKNOWN GOD, was the point on which he took his stand. Before the Areopagus, their highest court in affairs of religion, surrounded by stoics and epicureans, he presented to his astonished hearers the doctrine of the one, true God, the creator of all things, in whom we live, move, and have our being, and who by Him, whom he raised from the dead, will judge the world. Some mocked, others were willing to hear him again; a few believed, amongst whom was Dionysius, the Areopagite, who afterwards became the first bishop of Athens. From Athens, the apostle proceeded to Corinth, the metropolis of Achaia. He resided in the house of Aquila, a believing Jew, and laboured for his support as a maker of tents. He preached on the Sabbaths in the synagogues; but so violent was the opposition of the Jews, that he was compelled to turn to the Greeks, amongst whom he converted many to the faith of Jesus. During his abode at Corinth, there arose in that city one of the most flourishing of the Christian Churches. He was here visited by Silas and Timothy from Macedonia,



and received so favourable an account of the faithful whom they had left, that towards the end of the year 54, he addressed his first, and soon after his second, epistle to the Thessalonians.

Early in the year 56, St. Paul commenced his return to Syria, and after a short delay at Jerusalem, he began his third journey from Antioch through the provinces of Asia Minor. He resided chiefly at Ephesus, where he baptized twelve of the disciples of John, and by the sacrament of confirmation imparted to them the gifts of the Holy Ghost. The splendour of his miracles, and the power of his words, spread the Christian faith, not only in this great city, but also widely through the adjoining provinces. Here, for the first time, the suspicion arose that the kingdom of Christ threatened destruction to the religion of the nations, and now did the great Diana of the Ephesians tremble before the crucified Galilean. From Ephesus St. Paul addressed his epistle to the Galatians, to warn them against the errors of those teachers who had entered amongst them, and who taught the necessity of still adhering to the ceremonials of the Mosaic law. He also sent Titus with his first epistle to the Corinthians, whose Church had been threatened with schism. Being most anxious to revisit the Churches of Philippi and Thessalonica, he passed through Troas to Macedon, and wrote, in the year 59, his second epistle to the Corinthians. From the same place he addressed his first epistle to Timothy, whom he had placed over the Church of Ephesus. Whilst he thus dedicated his labours to the faithful of Greece, he wrote his epistle to the Romans, which he confided to the care of the deaconess Phœbe, who was journeying to that city. In the year 60, he returned to Jerusalem for the festival of Pentecost, and after he had defended his conduct against the accusations of the Judaizing Christians, he was doomed to pass through a most fiery persecution, that was raised against him by the Pharisees, who considered him no better than an apostate, and by that bitter enemy of the Christian name, the high-priest Annas. He was led to the tribunals of the Roman



procurators, Felix and Porcius Festus; but he appealed from them to the throne of Cæsar. In the year 62, he was conveyed to Rome as a captive, accompanied by his friends, Luke and Aristarchus. At Puteoli, the place of landing on the coast of Italy, he found several brethren, who received him with rejoicings. Many of the Christians of Rome, who had heard of his arrival, came from the city to meet him; and in the eighth year of the emperor Nero, the apostle of the Gentiles entered the capital of the Gentile world. (A.D. 63.)

The holy prisoner remained in Rome two years, receiving at his residence, and instructing in the religion of Christ, all those who came to visit him. At this period terminates the history of St. Luke, which seems to have been written about the year sixty-six. During his imprisonment, St. Paul wrote his short letter to Philemon, and the three epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians, in which he explains the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, of the Divinity of the Redeemer, and of the vocation of the Gentiles. It is probable that at this time he wrote also his epistle to the Hebrews—to those who dwelt at Jerusalem and in Judea,—in which he shews that Christianity is a development of the Jewish law, and proves how superior is the new, to the old, covenant.\*

By the apostolic zeal of St. Paul and his companions, the Christian religion spread rapidly in Rome: it gained admission even into the palace of the emperor, so that when writing to the Philippians, St. Paul could say, "All the saints salute you, especially they who are of Cæsar's household." It was probably through the intercession of his illustrious converts, that the apostle obtained his deliverance from captivity. He employed his freedom in new journeys, of which, however, we have no authentic detailed accounts. But we may

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\* Some writers, as Tertullian and St. Jerome, gave this epistle to Barnabas. The latter says, "Licet plerique (Græci sermonis scriptores) eam Barnabæ arbitrentur." Epis. ad Dard. This opinion could not affect the canonical authority of the epistle.

conjecture that he now put in execution his design, expressed in the epistle to the Romans, of visiting Spain. For this conjecture we have the authority of a contemporary writer, Clement of Rome, who says that Paul had been a herald of salvation from the east to the west, that he had preached to the whole of the world, (the Roman empire), and had travelled to the most extreme west.\* He visited also the island of Crete, with his disciple Timothy, whom he placed over the Church there, with the power of ordaining bishops and presbyters. He soon after addressed to him from Nicopolis, in Epirus, an epistle, containing rules for his guidance in his high office. Having passed through Corinth, he arrived again in Rome to console the faithful, who were there oppressed by the cruelties of Nero. How long he escaped the persecution is uncertain. In the year 67, he wrote his last epistle, the second, to his beloved Timothy. He wrote in chains, and in daily expectation of death. He was crowned with martyrdom in the same year, in the persecution which followed the burning of Rome, or in the second persecution, which after a short pause succeeded to the first. Nero was at that time in Greece; but in his absence his freedman, Helius Cesarius, and Polycletus, ruled with sovereign sway.†

All Christian antiquity tells us that St. Peter suffered death upon a cross in the same city, and at the same time with St. Paul. He thus sealed his faith after he had for many years presided as bishop over the Roman Church, and had transmitted to his successor in that see the primacy which he had received from Christ.

The time of his arrival in Rome, and the consequent duration of his episcopacy in that city, have been the subjects of many various opinions amongst the learned of ancient and modern times; nor is it possible to re-

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\* Many have imagined that by this expression we should understand Italy; but St. Clement, who wrote at Rome, could not say that Italy was the extreme west. St. Jerome, St. Cyril, St. Epiphanius, and Theodoret, mention the journey of St. Paul to Spain.

† He suffered, according to St. Clement, “ἐπὶ τῶν η̑γουμένων.”

concile the apparently conflicting statements of ancient writers, unless we suppose that the prince of the apostles resided at two distinct periods in the imperial capital. According to St. Jerome, Eusebius, and Orosius, his first arrival in Rome was in the second year of the reign of Claudius, (A.D. 42); but he was obliged, by the decree of the emperor, banishing all Jews from the city, to return to Jerusalem. From Jerusalem he undertook a journey through Asia Minor, and founded, or, at least, visited, the Churches of Pontus, Gallacia, Cappadocia, and Bythinia. To these Churches he afterwards addressed his epistle from Rome.\* His second journey to Rome was in the reign of Nero; and it is of this journey that Dionysius, of Corinth, and Lactantius, write. There, with the blessed Paul, he suffered, in the year 67, the death of a martyr. We may now ascertain that the period of twenty-five years assigned by Eusebius and St. Jerome, to the episcopacy of St. Peter in Rome, is not a fiction

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\* So all the Fathers understand the word Babylon used in the epistle. It has been asserted, especially by those who maintain the monstrous opinion that St. Peter never was at Rome, that we must take the word literally for Babylon on the Euphrates. These authors do not remember, that the Jews had been driven from Babylon and Seleucia a short time previous to the writing of this epistle, and we cannot suppose that St. Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, should travel to so distant a city, in which he could find none of his nation. In the epistle, St. Peter says that John Mark was with him: we know, from the writings of St. Paul, that Mark was at Rome about this time. It has been said, that in an epistle in which there exists no allegory nor allegorical form of speech, St. Peter could not, without some admonition, call Rome by the name of Babylon. St. Peter wrote to those Jewish converts who were familiar with the writings of the prophets, by whom Rome, the centre of paganism, is frequently designated by that appellation. I might cite the example of Luther, who, without previous allusion to the Apocalypse, dates his letter, written at Wartburg, from the island of Patmos. More weight might be given to the objection drawn from the Acts of the Apostles. It is said, that St. Paul found in Rome, that the chiefs of the Jews knew of the Christian religion only by report. How could this be if St. Peter had preached to them? We must bear in mind, that St. Peter's first entrance into Rome was before the expulsion of the Jews by Claudius. St. Paul was conducted to Rome in the reign of Nero, after the Jews had been permitted again to reside in the city. Those who had heard St. Peter, had been banished, and probably never returned.



of their imaginations; for from the second year of Claudius, in which the apostle founded the Church of Rome, to the year of his death, there intervene exactly twenty-five years. That he remained during the whole of this period in Rome, no one has pretended.

A few years before the martyrdom of these apostles, James, the son of Alphaeus, brother [cousin] of our Lord, was put to death at Jerusalem. The virtues of this holy apostle were well known to Jews and to Christians, and had gained for him the appellations of "the just,—the defence of the people." Often was he found in the temple upon his knees in prayer, supplicating mercy for his blinded countrymen. The younger Annas, (the son of him before whom our Redeemer was judged), had been raised to the dignity of high-priest, by Herod Agrippa II. Annas was a violent, artful, cruel man, and a Saducee. The Roman procurator, Festus, was dead, and the Saducee thought the time before the arrival of his successor, Albinus, a fit opportunity "to arraign," as Josephus says, "the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, before the tribunal of the great council. This man, named James, and others, were accused, and condemned to be stoned to death, as despisers of the law."\*

John, the son of Zebedee and Salome, and brother of James, the elder, consecrated his labours, in the latter years of his life, to the Churches of Asia. Tertullian relates that he was carried away to Rome by Domitian, and was there thrown into a cauldron of seething oil, from which he came forth unhurt. He was banished to the isle of Patmos, whence he wrote to the seven Churches of Asia his mysterious book of the Apocalypse. By the death of Domitian, the venerable apostle was enabled to return to Ephesus, where he composed his

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\* The manner of the death of St. James is differently related by Hegesippus. This author, apud Eusebium, relates, that he was placed upon a tower of the temple, from which he was cast down to the earth. He was severely bruised, but not killed by the fall, and raising himself upon his knees, he prayed for mercy upon his persecutors. Stones were then cast upon him, and he was at length slain by a stroke of a mace on the head. (See Stolberg, vol. vi.)

gospel, which he intended as a confirmation and supplement to the books of the preceding three evangelists. He wrote also at the same time his Catholic epistle.\* We are told of him, "that in old age he had become so debilitated, that he was wont to be carried on the shoulders of men to the assemblies of the faithful, and when his weakness would not allow him to hold long discourse, he would say to his hearers, 'Beloved children, love one another.' To those who enquired why he daily repeated the same words, he would answer, 'It is the command of the Lord, and he who shall obey it hath done sufficient.' " He died at Ephesus, in an extreme old age, in the first year of the second century.

Of the Virgin-mother of our Redeemer, Mary, we have but little information upon which we may rely, more than is related in the sacred Scriptures. It is supposed that she died about the year 45 or 47, at Jerusalem. Another opinion is, that she accompanied St. John to Ephesus, which could not have been before the year fifty-six.

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## SECTION V.

### EXPANSION OF THE CHURCH IN THE EAST AND WEST.†

AT the first appearance of the insurrection of the Jews against the power of the Romans, the Christians, who partook not of the visionary hopes of the Jewish enthusiasts, and who were mindful of the warnings of their

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\* After the return of St. John, occurred the well-known and interesting event—the conversion of the young robber, which is related by Clement of Alexandria.

† Fabricii, *Salutaris Lux Evangelii toti orbi exoriens*, Hamb. 1731; Blumhardt, *Versuch einer allgemeinen Missionsgeschichte der Kirche Christi*, Basil. 1828; Lequien, *Oriens Christianus*, Paris, 1740; Ferd. Ughelli, *Italia Sacra*; S. A. Morrelli, *Africa Christiana*; M. Alford, *Fides Regia Britannica, sive Annales Ecclesiæ Britannicæ*, Leodii, 1663.

Lord (Matt. xxiv. 16), fled to Pella in Petrea. Vespasian was sent to Judea to suppress the rebellion, and after he had been proclaimed emperor of Rome, his son Titus conducted his irresistible legions to the walls of Jerusalem. The Paschal solemnity had drawn a countless multitude into the city, and whilst their enemy approached from without, all was confusion within. The zealots were engaged in daily and bloody strife: citizen slew citizen, and the blood of the murdered oftentimes profaned the holy of holies in the temple. At length the city was stormed and taken: the temple was burned: more than a million of the inhabitants perished, during the siege and in the attack, by famine, by the sword, or in the flames: ninety-seven thousand were sent away, in chains, for the barbarous sport of their conquerors in the theatre, or to be sold as slaves in their markets. When the thirst of the Romans for blood and plunder had been sated, the still-standing walls of the temple were cast down, and the foundations were uprooted from the earth. The city was razed, and the plough passed over it, as a sign that never should a city or a temple be built there again. Three gates were left standing, to proclaim where Jerusalem once had been. Thus, after a siege unparalleled in the history of war, fell this noble city, the beloved Jerusalem, after it had flourished under the protection of Heaven more than two thousand years. The miserable citizens, who had not been carried away in chains, or crucified around the walls of Jerusalem, wandered forlorn over their once happy land. Their descendants, after a vain attempt, in the reign of Adrian, to rebuild their city, were scattered amongst the nations of the earth, where their children may to this day be seen distinct from the nations with whom they live.

The seat of the Jewish religion had fallen: the city of sacrifice had been destroyed: that implacable enemy of Christ, the Sanhedrim, had been annihilated: it had become evident, even to the most darkened eye, that the time had arrived, in which the Church should spring forth, as the young plant, from the dead seed of Judaism,



and should, in short space, become the vast tree, spreading its branches over the whole earth. The natural inclination of the Jewish Christians to the ancient ceremonial was destroyed, when they beheld the city and the temple fallen : the spirit of the gospel liberated itself,—gradually, indeed, but effectually,—from the bondage of the law. The distinction between Jew and Gentile-Christian disappeared, and the proud superiority claimed by the former above the latter fell away for ever. Those stiff-necked, half Christians, who still obstinately adhered to the law of Moses, as necessary to salvation, separated themselves from the Church, and formed the sect of Ebionites.

The Christians of Jerusalem were the most persevering in their attachment to the law of their fathers. When the city began to rise from its ashes, and some parts had again become habitable, many of the dispersed Christians returned with their bishop Simeon, who was succeeded by thirteen others, all of Jewish origin, in the government of that community, until the second destruction of Jerusalem by the emperor Adrian. These Christians continued to observe the forms of the Mosaic law ; but Adrian published a decree, afterwards revoked by Antoninus, forbidding, under pain of death, the use of circumcision. This must have determined the Christians, who saw no absolute necessity for its continuance, to abandon this rite. This law of the emperor provoked an insurrection of the Jews in Palestine and Syria. They were headed by an enthusiast who called himself Barkochba,\* who proclaimed himself, and was acknowledged and anointed king. At the command of this rebel, many Christians, who refused to renounce their faith, and join with him in his insurrection, were tortured and slain. In the year 136, Jerusalem again fell beneath the power of Rome : Palestine was laid waste as the desert, and many young and vigorous Churches were destroyed. Adrian raised another city near the ruins of Jerusalem, which he peopled with

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\* "Son of the Star," in allusion to Numbers xxiv. 17.

Roman colonists, and named *Ælia Capitolina*. To the Jews, entrance into this new city was strictly forbidden.\* The Jewish Christians who dwelt therein feared to confess their descent, and were consequently compelled to discontinue every practice of the ancient religion. They became united with the Gentile-Christian inhabitants, and formed with them one Church, under the bishop Mark, who was of pagan descent, as were all his successors.

After that of Jerusalem, the Church of *Cæsarea* was the most conspicuous in Palestine ; but the principal Church of the east was, in an early age, and continued long to be, that of *Antioch*. From *Evodius*, who was placed over it by St. Peter, it had, in the year 318, seen twenty bishops at its head. At *Edessa* there was, in the year 228, a flourishing Christian Church. The apostle, and the first bishop of the Chaldeans, was *Maris*, a disciple of St. *Thaddeus*. The see of *Seleucia*, founded by *Maris*, united with that of *Ctesiphon*, became the metropolitan of the Parthian, afterwards called the Persian, nation, in which Christianity had made early and rapid advances. The ancient Churches of *Asia Minor* had been founded either by the apostles, or by their immediate disciples. In *Bithynia*, the proconsul *Pliny* complained to his emperor of the progress of the new superstition (Christianity), which had invaded and subdued almost every part of his province. The islands of *Crete* and *Cyprus* had received the faith from SS. *Paul*, *Titus*, and *Barnabas*. The Church of *Alexandria*, the second in rank in Christendom, was formed by the evangelist St. Mark,

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\* We can scarcely refrain from tears while reading the description given by St. Jerome of the "day of mourning," on which the Jews were permitted, upon the payment of a sum of money to the Roman soldiers, to revisit their fallen city :—" *Et ut eis suæ flere liceat ruinam civitatis pretio redimunt: ut qui quondam emerunt sanguinem Christi emant nunc lacrymas suas. Vox solemnitatis versa est in planctum. Adhuc fletus in genis et livida brachia et sparsi crines; et miles mercedem postulat, ut illis flere plus liceat. Et dubitat aliquis cùm hoc videat de die tribulationis et angustiae, de die calamitatis et miseriae, de die tenebrarum et caliginis, de die nebulæ et turbinis, de die tubæ et clangoris?*"

who had been sent thither by St. Peter. According to comparatively recent but credible accounts, Egypt possessed no other bishopric than that of Alexandria before the commencement of the third century. Other bishoprics were erected by Demetrius of Alexandria, and by his successors Dionysius and Heracleus. At the council of Nice, we find the bishops of Naucratis, Phethenothus, Pelusium, Panephyros, Memphis, and the venerable Potamon, bishop of Upper Heraclea, who bore upon his body the wounds which he had received from the pagan persecutors, by whom he had been condemned to work in the mines. That there then existed many other bishops in Egypt, is evident from the history of the Miletian schism, during which many prelates were deprived of their sees by Miletius. In the Thebais there were, in an early age, the Churches of Antinoe, Hermapolis, and Lycopolis. The Pentapolis possessed the metropolitan Church of Ptolemais.

From the east we will pass to the west, and in Thrace we shall find the Church of Heraclea. Macedon could boast of the apostolic Churches at Thessalonica, Philippi, and Berrœa. Corinth also received the faith from St. Paul. The first bishop of Athens was the convert Dionysius, the Areopagite. The most ancient Church of Italy was, without doubt, the Roman. The account given by Suetonius of the insurrection of the Jews in Rome, headed by Chrestus, in the reign of Claudius, may refer to the first announcement of the faith of Christ by the apostles. The Church of Rome soon became one of the most numerous and flourishing of the Christian communities. Tacitus informs us, that as early as the reign of Nero, a vast multitude of Christians suffered death for their religion. In the year 250, there were in Rome seventy-six priests, fourteen deacons and subdeacons, fifty lectors, exorcists, and porters; and in the persecution of Diocletian, the faithful had erected forty churches for the celebration of the Divine mysteries. According to the oldest traditions, many other communities of Christians were formed in dif-



ferent parts of Italy and Sicily by the disciples of St. Peter.\*

We have no records which recount the first appearance of the Christian religion in Africa; but it is most probable that it travelled from Rome to the northern shores, and settled first at Carthage. Towards the end of the second century, the faith had so far extended, that Agrippinus, of Carthage, convoked and held a synod of seventy African bishops. Nor was it confined to the proconsulate of Africa: Numidia and Mauritania could enumerate their three hundred Churches, and St. Cyprian makes mention of a council that had been celebrated, consisting of ninety of the bishops of Numidia. St. James is said to have preached the faith in Spain; and we have already seen, that it may be said that St. Paul also visited the people of Spain, but of his labours among them we have no authentic documents. History first presents to us the names of Spanish Churches and Spanish bishops in the year 250, when Martial of Leon, and Basilides of Astorga, yielding to the violence of persecution in the reign of Decius, were deposed by a

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\* The order of the succession of the Roman pontiffs has been given by St. Irenæus, Eusebius, St. Augustine, and others; but great confusion exists with regard to the three or four pontiffs immediately succeeding the apostle. The "*Catalogus Liberianus*," which contains a list of the popes down to Liberius, and which was probably drawn up about the year 354, is considered by many as the most correct. But even this contains manifest errors. It is therefore, perhaps, more safe to follow the order given by St. Irenæus and Eusebius. All agree that Linus, mentioned by St. Paul in the epistle to Timothy, was the first successor of St. Peter; but the Liberian catalogue would make him to have been bishop during the lifetime of the apostle, "that he might," as Rufinus remarks, "take upon himself the care of the city while St. Peter was sometimes withdrawn by the duties of the apostleship." To Linus succeeded Anencletus, who is by some considered, but without sufficient reason, as distinct from Cletus. He was followed by Clement, whose name, St. Paul says, was written in the book of life. From the epistle of St. Clement to the Corinthians, we can fix the time of his pontificate. In this letter there is no mention of Gnosticism: one persecution, and that of short duration, is spoken of—that of Nero, in which the apostles suffered. St. Clement speaks of the sacrifices of the Jews as still continuing, consequently at Jerusalem. The epistle, therefore, was written after the persecution of Nero, and before the destruction of Jerusalem,—about the year 68.

synod. Another Spanish bishop, Fructuosus of Tarragona, gave brilliant proof of his faith in the same persecution, and suffered death by fire, together with his two deacons. In the year 306, a council of nineteen bishops was held at Elvira, the decisions of which bear testimony to the ancient practices of the Spanish Church. Many disputes have arisen as to the time when Christianity was introduced into Gaul: some authors contend that it was planted there by the disciples of the apostles. St. Epiphanius gives the glory of having first preached the faith in Gaul to the evangelist St. Luke; Eusebius to Crescens, a disciple of St. Paul, mentioned in the 2nd Epistle to Timothy, chap. iv. in which passage, Eusebius for Galatia reads Gaul. But these, and others, are traditions upon which we may not depend; and after diligent research, we must come to this conclusion, that Christianity was unknown in Gaul until the middle of the second century. Sulpicius Severus expressly says, "The first martyrs of Gaul suffered in the reign of Marcus Aurelius; for religion found a resting-place late on that side of the Alps." Photinus of Asia Minor, a scholar of the blessed Polycarp, who accompanied his master to Rome, was the first bishop of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne. He suffered martyrdom, at an advanced age, in 178, and was succeeded by Irenæus, also an Asiatic, who died for his faith in the year 202. In the third century the pope, St. Fabian, sent into Gaul seven bishops, amongst whom was Dionysius, who placed his episcopal see in Paris. This St. Dionysius has often been erroneously confounded with Dionysius the Areopagite. The acts of the martyrs in succeeding ages show that religion soon struck deep roots, and spread widely amongst the Gauls.

St. Irenæus testifies that the countries on the left bank of the Rhine, as far as Belgium, had been blessed with the light of the gospel early in the second century. At the commencement of the fourth age there were flourishing churches at Triers, Cologne, and Metz. In the countries watered by the Danube—Noricum, Rhetia, Austria, Bavaria, Tyrol, and the Grisons—communities

of Christians had been established in the earliest part of the third century. In 303, the holy bishop Victorinus, of Pettau, in Stiria, suffered martyrdom; and about the same time the virgin St. Afra was burned to death for the faith at Augsburg.

There exist many evidences that the Christian religion found an early entrance into Britain. As far back as the reign of Claudius, there had been civil and military colonies on the island; and if the opinion of Eusebius and Theodoret, that St. Paul preached in Britain, can be maintained, we must suppose that he addressed himself to these colonists. Tertullian and Origen are authorities that there were Churches in Britain in the beginning of the third century, even in regions which had never been trodden by the Roman armies.\* As long as the ascendancy of the Druids continued, Christianity could make only slow progress among the Britains. But they had been attacked, and almost destroyed, in their last retreat, on the isle of Anglesea, in the year 61, by the Romans, under Suetonius. With them fell the strongest bulwark of the national idolatry. The venerable Bede and Nennius relate, that the British chieftain Lucius sent an embassy to Rome, about the year 180, praying the pope Eleutherius to send to him teachers who might instruct his people in the truths of the gospel. The pope sent Fugatius and Damianus, who baptized Lucius and many of his nation.† From that period unto the fourth century, history has recorded nothing of the British Church. The sanguinary edicts of Diocletian reached Britain in 303. "The churches," writes Gildas, the most ancient of British historians, "were thrown to the ground; the sacred books were burned upon the public ways; clergy and laity were doomed to die; numbers of Christians fled into the woods, or concealed themselves in caves; so that in many places scarcely a vestige of Christianity

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\* "*Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca, Christo vero subdita.*" Tertull. adv. Judæos.

† Usher, "*Antiq. Eccles. Britan.*," p. 39, asserts, that there exist ancient coins, bearing the letters L. U. C. and a cross.



remained." The Cæsar Constantius wished, indeed, to proceed with lenity towards the Christians, but he could not restrain the fury of the pagan priests and people, enflamed the more by the edicts from Rome. The first British blood shed for the faith was that of the holy Alban of Verulam (now St. Albans), who received into his house a Christian priest fleeing from his persecutors. By him he was converted to Christianity, and was soon after baptized in his blood.\*

It were to be wished that we could form an estimation of the comparative numbers of the Christians and pagans during the second and third centuries: but there are existing no records from which this result may be drawn. We may, however, conclude from the fact that in the reign of Diocletian there were in Rome forty churches, that the number of the faithful must have then been very considerable. The complaints of Pliny and of Alexander, that in Bithynia and Pontus the numbers of the Christians had increased so greatly that the temples of the Gods were deserted, show what rapid strides Christianity had made in those provinces in the first half of the second century. St. Justin writes, "There is no nation in which there are not many who believe in Christ." "The Church," says St. Irenæus, "extends over the whole universe, from one extremity of the earth to the other." More worthy of attention still, though it may be that they are not entirely free from rhetorical amplification, are the words of Tertullian:—"We are but of yesterday, and we surround you on every side. We fill your cities, your islands, your villages and fortresses, your mancipia, your councils, camps, and tribes; yea, the imperial court, the senate, and the forum: to you we leave only the temples. We can count your armies, but the Christians of a single province are more numerous. Did we wish to revenge ourselves, what an awful war should we wage? Should

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\* After the persecution had ceased, we find three British bishops at the council of Arles,—Eborius of York, Restitutus of London, and Adelfius "de civitate colonia Londiniensium." (Lincoln?)

we retire from among you to some distant land, how would the loss of so many citizens confound your power? You would tremble at the solitude, at the sepulchral stillness of a deceased world." St. Cyprian, also, in his writings to Demetrian, speaks of the vast multitudes of the Christians, to whom it would be easy, if they desired it, to revenge the horrors which they endured from their persecutors. In testimony of this wonderful increase in the number of Christians, Eusebius relates a fact which should not pass unnoticed. When Maxentius raised himself to the throne of the Cæsars, he feigned for a time to have become a Christian, "that he might thereby please and flatter the Roman people." If the relation be founded on truth, how vast must have then been the number of Christians in the capital of the world!

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## SECTION VI.

### OF THE CAUSES WHICH ACCELERATED, AND OF OTHERS WHICH IMPEDED, THE PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY.

THUS had Christianity become, before three centuries had passed away, a power which had subdued nearly the whole world,—but they had been centuries of bloody strife with the horrid cruelties of idolatry. Before, however, we proceed to the recital of the great combat which persecution waged against the Church, we will view, on the one side, the various causes which favoured the propagation of the faith; and, on the other, some of many impediments which rose up to arrest its course.

It was a circumstance oftentimes favourable to the Church in the first century, that it was considered no more than a Jewish sect; for being thus tolerated by the Romans, it was enabled to strike those deep roots which supported it in the storms that afterwards swept over it. The vast extent of the Roman empire, which

embraced within itself almost the entire of the civilized world, placed no barriers of national enmity to the mission of the apostles and their successors, and rendered the communication of one community with another constant and rapid. A great advantage was likewise gained by the adoption, by the preachers of the new religion, of the Greek language, which, since the conquests of the Macedonians, had extended widely through the east. In this they clothed their doctrines,—in this were their sacred books composed. With the language, the wisdom also of Greece was adopted to advance the cause of Christianity. Men, such as Clement, Justin, and Origen, whose learning was unbounded, and who were well versed in the philosophy of Greece, employed the treasures of their knowledge to demonstrate the poverty of all the philosophic systems,—their inability to reward those who sought in them for true wisdom and peace. They employed their eloquence also to exhibit the pure and exalted spirit of Christianity, and thus introduced a knowledge of its doctrines into the societies of the learned.

In the second, and more particularly in the third century, the numbers of the Christians were greatly augmented by the awful miseries with which the world was visited. The worthlessness of the emperors; the fierce and unbridled cruelty of the soldiers; the oppression and avarice of the governors; the destroying incursions of the barbarians; physical evils, plagues, earthquakes, famine, and inundations, united, with the most intolerable despotism, to produce the wildest anarchy, and to inflict upon the wretched people all the miseries of a corrupted and decaying empire. When thousands had lost their possessions in the storms of civil warfare; when pestilence or the sword had robbed others of their dearest relatives; when only cold cruelty and barbarous oppression were found in their rulers, and vice in their equals; they beheld in the society of the Christians happiness and joy,—virtue and peace. Many, indeed, drew from the evils of the times new motives of zeal to serve their false Gods more fervently,



and to seek their consolation amidst the dark practices of magic and incantations.

The more men become attached to their faith, the more do they learn to estimate the blessing of being members of the Church, and more earnestly do they desire to impart this blessing to others, especially to their relatives and friends. Of the Christians in the first ages, few had been born in the Church: they embraced the faith in their manhood, and frequently after many a severe and painful interior struggle: their conversion was often purchased at the price of bitter sacrifices. Hence they learned to value more dearly the faith which they had acquired (in the estimation of men) at so great a cost, and considered themselves more bound to labour in its propagation. Thus every Christian became an apostle. The father announced the gospel to his family, the slave to his master, the soldier to his companion in arms, and the friend to his friend. The firm conviction, the immoveable faith, the generous fervour, with which this declaration was made, seldom failed of effect, and often overcame the most obstinate resistance. Many of the new converts dedicated their whole life to this apostolic duty, with what zeal and fruit we are informed by Eusebius: "Many of these disciples, whose hearts the Divine word had inflamed with a love for true wisdom, obeyed that commandment of their Saviour, to sell all things and give them to the poor. They departed then to distant lands, and preached Christ to those who before had never heard his name. . . . . Assisted by Divine grace, they were powerful in miracles, so that many no sooner heard their words than they fell down to adore the true God."

More powerfully than words, did the lives of the Christians speak to their pagan cotemporaries. Those virtues which had been little known and less practised by the idolaters,—meekness, the pardon of injuries, chastity, and temperance,—shone brightly in the disciples of Christ, and, in these living examples, wrought a deep impression in the mind of unbelievers. When in the third century a pestilence spread its deadly ravages

through the empire, the astonished pagans saw the Christians, regardless of contagion, offering every kind attention to the diseased, and burying them when dead; whilst they, with cold self-love intent only on their own preservation, sought their safety at a distance from the unhappy sufferers. Hence arose in many an idolater the desire to know a religion, which breathed into its members so powerful a spirit of charity to mankind. The effects, of which they were witnesses, taught them to esteem the doctrines which produced them, and opened their minds and their hearts to the entrance of truth. The mutual love which the pagan observed in the Christians, and that band of fraternal charity, which an exposure to the same dangers, and a unity of faith and hope, drew more closely, and more firmly, spoke loudly in favour of their religion. So wonderful did this love appear to the eyes of the strangers, that they exclaimed, "See how they love one another!" "And well may they thus exclaim," says Tertullian, "for see how *they* hate one another." The stronger was the contrast between the charity of the Christians and the interested self-love of the pagans, the more inviting must have appeared to many that Church in which enmities were suppressed, and in which effectual and mutual love as if spontaneously arose.

That spirit of liberty, by which the Christians were animated, and which was equally removed from slavery and insubordination, must also have recommended the new religion to many of the considerate amongst the pagans. In an age when the pride and tyranny of rulers met with abject submission and base flattery in their subjects, the Christians alone stood forth as examples of loyalty and obedience, whilst at the same time they were determined to defend themselves in the possession of true liberty—the liberty of mind and of conscience.\* In all that regarded their faith, or the exercise of their religion, they recognized no earthly lord, no command of the emperors: they refused obedience

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\* "Ipsam libertatem pro qua mori novimus."—Tertull. ad Nat. i. 4.

not only to the edicts by which the emperors endeavoured to compel them to forsake their religion, but those also, which prohibited their assemblies, and called for their sacred books. They fearlessly proclaimed, "Man belongs to God, not to Cæsar."\* They were strangers to human respect, and every attempt of the state to intrude into their spiritual life was repelled by them with indignation, as in religion they obeyed no other authority than that of God and of his Church.

The means employed to suppress, to destroy, Christianity, produced the contrary effect. Almost all the Christian writers declared that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of new confessors, and that after every persecution the numbers of the faithful had increased. Thus St. Justin, in his dialogue with Tryphon, writes, "The more tribulation is prepared for us, the greater will become the multitude of the sincere and fervent followers of Christ. For as we often prune the fruitful vine, that new and strong branches may bud forth, so it is with the Christians, who are as a vine planted by God and by our Saviour Jesus Christ." Tertullian also, at the conclusion of his apology, says, "Your ingenious cruelty is vain, or rather it is as a spell which increases our numbers: we multiply under your harvest of slaughter, for the blood of Christians is their seed." Again he says, "This obstinacy, of which you accuse us, is a powerful instruction. For who can contemplate it and not seek for its cause? Who can consider this cause and not separate himself from you, and not burn to die for that which he has learned?" It is, indeed, true that many of the pagans considered the fortitude with which the Christians endured torments and death, as no more than blinded obstinacy; and the above passage from Tertullian is strengthened by one from the monologues of the philosophical emperor, Marcus Aurelius. In this it is said, that the Christians rush to meet death, not led by reflection, but by mere obstinacy.† Pliny, in his

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\* Tertull. Scorp. c. 14, 'Solius autem Dei homo.'

† L. xi. § 3, *κατα ψαλην παραταξιν*. The signification of these words may be, "like light-armed soldiers," who are borne rashly to the fight. More strange is the expression of Arrian, a disciple of Epictetus, when



narrative to Trajan, writes, that the inflexible stupidity of the Christians is worthy of punishment. If, however, they had shown no more than a cool disdain of death, or a calm resignation in their torments, they would have produced only a slight impression, in an age when suicides and executions were the occurrences of every day, or upon men who had been hardened by the cruelties of civil war, and the horrors of the arena,—upon men who would encourage the wounded gladiator to die manfully and with grace. But the Christians displayed a something more noble than that indifference which cast away life as a burden, or which sunk beneath an inevitable fate. Not only men, even women, children, and tender virgins, suffered all that the ingenious cruelty of their tormentors could inflict, without a complaint, without a sigh of pain: by their patience in suffering they fatigued their tormentors, and then thanked them for affording them the opportunity of shedding their blood for their faith. They displayed not the least sign of anger or hate against their accusers—so that the astonished pagan, who was not blinded by prejudice, felt within himself a suspicion, that it was something more than a sullen contempt of death, which raised the Christian so high above the ordinary weakness of nature. A nearer consideration converted this suspicion into certainty; and that which had been to the pagan an inexplicable enigma, seized, when he had become a Christian, upon all the faculties of his soul.\* Oftentimes the contemplation of this extraordinary contempt

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speaking of the fortitude of the Christians, or Galileans, as he names them. It is, he says, only through madness and custom, that they fear not death. *Ἐῖτα ὑπομανίας μὲν δύναται τις οὕτω διατεθῆναι πρὸς ταῦτα, καὶ ὑποεθόνος ὡς οἱ Γαλιλαῖοι.*

\* This is confirmed by a beautiful passage of Lactantius, *Inst. L. v. c. 13*: “*Nam cum videat vulgus dilacerari homines variis tormentorum generibus, et inter fatigatos carnifices invictam tenere patientiam, existimant id quod res est, nec consensum tam multorum, nec perseverantiam morientium vanam esse, nec ipsam patientiam sine Deo cruciatus tantos posse superare. . . . Nostri autem, ut de viris taceam, pueri et mulierculæ tortores suos taciti vincunt et expromere illis gemitum nec ignis potest. . . . Ecce sexus infirmus et fragilis ætas dilacerari se toto corpore utique perpetitur non necessitate quia licet vitare, si vellent, sed voluntate, quia confidunt in Deo.*”

of death, and of torments, wrought the conversion of many who had come only as idle spectators to gaze upon these scenes of blood.

Our Lord had provided, in the power of working miracles, another most effectual instrument for the propagation of his religion. The promise which our Saviour made to his apostles, before his departure from them—that they should possess power over evil spirits and over all nature—was fulfilled immediately after his ascension, and continued long in the Church, either for the good of individuals, or to confirm the truth and the divinity of the Christian faith. The disciples, whom the Lord endowed with these gifts, confessed that it was given not on their own account, but for the edification of others, and that, therefore, no one could glory in them. The gift of miracles was necessary in a time in which paganism boasted of its signs and wonders, effected either by the co-operation of the demon, or by the secret powers of nature, and by the performance of which the priests and magicians sought to delude the people, and to retain them in their idolatry. To these the Christians opposed the single power of the name of Jesus Christ and the sign of His cross, and by this holy name paralysed the incantations of the pagan enchanter. St. Justin in his Apology appeals to the fact—that in Rome there had been, and still were, many who had been possessed by demons, who had defied the spells of magicians, but had been healed by the name of Jesus. There is, perhaps, no point of Christian antiquity more fully attested than this. St. Irenæus enumerates the many kinds of diseases that were cured, and the many supernatural gifts possessed, by the Christians. So great was the confidence of Tertullian on this subject, that he dared to challenge the pagans in these words: “Place before your tribunal a man possessed by the evil spirit;—at the command of a Christian, the demon shall reveal himself in his true character: if not, cause the blood of the presumptuous Christian to flow around you.” “What,” he adds, “can be more convincing than this trial, what more

clear than this proof? Truth is here displayed in the cause of the Christian, and leaves no room for doubt." In his writings to Scapula, he says that the cure of possessed persons by Christians was an event of daily occurrence. Origen also, in his refutation of Celsus, adduces these miraculous exorcisms, and declares that he has often seen the most inveterate and loathsome diseases instantaneously healed by Christians who had invoked the name of God, or of our Lord Jesus Christ. Minucius Felix, St. Cyprian, Lactantius, Firmicus Maternus, and many other ancient writers, mention this power of the Christians over the demons as a daily phenomenon, as a convincing proof of the truth of the Christian faith, and of the falsehood of polytheism.

Thus, in addition to the miraculous cures of diseases, the first Christians employed the expulsion of demons from the bodies of those whom they had invaded, to conquer the obstinacy of those pagans, who else would have resisted the word of God, and to induce them to receive the gospel, of which the doctrines were confirmed by so great wonders. The dominion which the Lord, during his abode on earth, exercised upon evil spirits, remained, through his grace, in the Church; and devout Christians compelled, even as he had done, the demons to confess their names, and to acknowledge the power of the true God. And if in the time of Jesus and his apostles, there were found so many possessed persons amongst the Jews, how much more must the power of the wicked angels have exerted itself upon the bodies and souls of idolaters who were subjected to the influence of a polytheism, which had degenerated into a worship of demons, and of an impiety as enormous as it was universal. As history frequently presents to us in one and the same time the most violent contrasts, so it exhibits to us here on the one hand the kingdom of God, on the other the kingdom of Satan, both in full power, and arrayed against each other. The latter, with a presentiment of its destruction, had collected all its forces, and while the disciples of Jesus shone in the brilliancy of supernatural powers, the dark kingdom of



the demon possessed its defendants amidst the adepts of magic (for we cannot suppose them all to have been mere jugglers), and in the crowds of the possessed. To learn how far these supernatural powers contributed to disseminate the faith, and how widely they opened for the word of God the way to the before closed hearts of the idolaters, we have only to consult the triumphing writings of the Fathers and apologists, who on every occasion opposed this powerful and attested proof to the defenders of paganism. The testimony of St. Iræneus farther informs us, that of those who had been healed of infirmities, or delivered from evil spirits, many became converts to Christianity.

In seeking the causes of the rapid and powerful propagation of the gospel, we must enter into the very interior of the doctrines of Christianity. Here we shall discover, that in the doctrines of redemption and of the remission of sin, the great power of attraction lay. Not all those pagans, whom the consciousness of crime disturbed, could calm their troubled minds by the oblation of their sin-offerings, or by the practice of those empty ceremonies to which their priests attributed the efficacy of remitting sins, and of appeasing the Gods. Not the sprinkling of lustral water,—nor the burning of incense,—nor the horrid taurobolia and criobolia,—could long appease their remorse and anguish of soul. But when the cheering truth was told them, that a merciful God had done for them that which they could not do for themselves,—that it was left to them to apply to their souls the fruits of that sacrifice for sin which was offered on the cross,—that by their faith in a divine Redeemer and Mediator, they should be freed from their past sins,—that by baptism they should be spiritually born again, and received into the friendship of their appeased Creator,—then the gospel was indeed a gospel (good tidings) to them; and eagerly they seized a faith which supplied, beyond all hope, their deep-felt wants. Powerfully does St. Cyprian, in his letter to Donatus, describe, from his own knowledge, the state of a pagan converted to Christianity. He had

thought, while immersed in the darkness of idolatry, that a moral regeneration, and an entire change in the sentiments of man, were things impossible: his own experience had happily convinced him of the contrary. When adversaries, such as Celsus, objected to the Christians, that they promised the kingdom of God to sinners,—to the miserable and the unworthy, whom, if punishments could not terrify, mercy could not change,—the apologists of the faith thought it sufficient to refer them to the number of those who had indeed become changed by their faith,—who had passed from crime to lives of good order and virtue.

Those numerous classes of men, whose constant labour or poverty kept them at a distance from the refined luxuries of the higher ranks of society,—artisans, husbandmen, and slaves, who were more virtuous or less vicious than the rich,—were also more accessible to the light of the gospel. The narrow spheres in which they moved, and the continued labour which their wants imposed upon them, made them strangers to the vices, the intemperance, the idleness, the avarice of the rich; and when, to satisfy the duty of worshipping the Deity, they sometimes entered into the assemblies of the faithful, there frequently was required no more than the announcement of the chief truths of Christianity, to win their hearts, their unprejudiced hearts, to a belief in the faith of the gospel. If there were many among the slaves wicked as their masters, by whose example they had been taught, there were many also faithful to their duties, and, in their lowly state, free from great crimes;—men by whom the gospel, which recognizes no distinction between master and servant, was hailed as the first rising of a bright and vivifying sun. There are records which tell us, that among this class of men—poor, unlearned, oppressed, but comparatively virtuous—Christianity made its most rapid progress; so that it became a reproach among the idolaters, that the Church could gain only the illiterate and base populace.

But the faith entered also into the hearts of many, who, familiar with the learning and philosophy of

Greece, found within their souls a void which none of their systems could fill. Dissatisfied with the cold pride, the melancholy fatalism and pantheism of the Stoics, they felt still greater aversion to the intemperance and bold infidelity of the Epicureans, the disgusting rudeness and shameless vices of the Cynics. The more noble doctrines of Plato and Pythagoras were adapted to excite, not to satisfy, religious desires;—to entangle the mind in labyrinths of disquisitions, not to present to it the talisman that could guide it from darkness to the clear light of truth. To these questions, “What is God, and what is man?—in what relation does man stand with God?—how can the sinner obtain forgiveness?—what is the lot of man after death?”—the heathen philosophers could return no answer that could satisfy a religious and thinking inquirer. But in the doctrines of Christianity he found the solution of his doubts, the answer to his anxious questions;—and, more, he found that of which there existed no trace in paganism or in the schools of philosophy,—he found a perfect harmony of conviction, an uniform and firm system of teaching, based upon the oral and written tradition of Jesus and his apostles, of the possession of which the Church alone could boast. In the Church, he was not required to rest his faith upon the word of men, sinful and erring as himself;—he was not told to appeal to his own reason, clouded by dark passion and prejudice;—he was not told to take a book into his hand, there to discover what should form his faith;—but the living Word, as it had been spoken by God made Man, and His apostles, as it was daily and faithfully repeated in his Church,—was the source of his faith and knowledge, the key to all his doubts, the anchor by which he felt himself secure, amidst the many winds of error and delusion. As a pagan, he was compelled to divide himself, to find nourishment for his mind and heart. If he sought learning, he became a member of some philosophic school: if he wished to take part in the public worship and sacrifices, he must enter the temples and conform to the prescribed rituals:



if he sought to know the signification of the traditions and fables of his religion,—to console his piety with the representation of sacred symbols,—he could gain this knowledge only by being initiated in the mysteries. And what contradictions did he oftentimes discover, between the doctrines of the schools, the practice of the temples, and the secrets of initiation! But in the Church he found all things united, all flowing on in harmony. The public instructions of the school and religious assembly, the sacred rites and the oblation of the sacrifice, conducted in natural order the one to the other. In place of the confused, melancholy, and fruitless speculations of philosophy, he heard—first, among the catechumens, and afterwards, when admitted to the sacrifice—the simple, clear, and mild lessons of the gospel: instead of explications and symbols drawn from the philosophy of nature, which, together with the mysteries, had degenerated into idle speculations, there were presented to him in the Church the sublime and moral mysteries of the Incarnation, the Redemption, and of the Eucharist: instead of the bloody sacrifices offered in the temples, he saw in the Christian assemblies, the only, the pure and unbloody oblation, celebrated as a reiteration and continuation of the great sin-offering of the Cross.

The pagan must have often been tormented with doubt in his selection of an object of adoration from the many Gods with which his religion abounded, and with an anxiety in the fear that while he honoured one, he might incur the indignation of another: the Christian adored only one God, feared only sin, and reposed with confidence upon his Redeemer. To the heathen, the holy virtues of faith, hope, and charity, were unknown: instead of faith he possessed only suspicion; instead of hope, doubts and despair; and, instead of charity, only tormenting fear: the Christian, on the contrary, possessed, in his faith in the Son of God and in His Church, which was guided by the Divine Spirit, an infallible standard of truth: the hope of the blessings promised by Jesus Christ to his disciples, filled him with joy, to which

he had before been a stranger : his love of his God, by whom he had first been loved and overwhelmed with blessings, exalted and ennobled his whole being. The mysteries and feasts which he had hitherto joined in celebrating, and which referred only to this material world, to the changes of the seasons, to the stars, to the times of sowing, and of harvest, left him cold and indifferent, if not with a mind corrupted by their accompanying profanations : but as a Christian, he solemnized rites which recalled to his mind the benefits of his redemption and regeneration. He had before, when he knew not of an unceasing and all-ruling Providence, sought his future destiny in the flight of birds, in the entrails of victims, or in the courses of the stars ; and from these deluding signs he had either gained an anxious dread of possible evils, or he had been lulled by them into a fatal security : now he entrusted himself to the parental love of his all-wise God, without whose permission there fell not a hair from his head. When an idolater, he had been a slave to omens, to auguries, and dreams : the cry of a mouse, or the crowing of a cock, was sufficient to fill him with terror and to divert him from his occupations : the uncleanness, occasioned by the touch of a dead body, would haunt his conscience more than the foul stain of the darkest crime : but when a Christian, he was liberated from this disgraceful servitude : he feared God, and knew no other fear. Lastly, when a pagan, he had been held in the most painful anxiety as to his future existence, or had joined in the despairing belief of the multitude, that with death his entire being should end : as a Christian, he believed in a future blessedness, in the eternal contemplation of the majesty of God ; and by this faith he learned the value and the object of his present life, as a preparation for the future.

If the majority of the heathens had been sunk in total unbelief, or in a gross apathy of religious indifference, Christianity would never have penetrated amongst them. Those, who were thus incredulous or indifferent, bestowed upon it at the most only a passing consideration, and then dismissed it, with solemn contempt, into the

mass of the many other forms of superstitions or delusions. Those, on the contrary, who retained sentiments of religion, who were dissatisfied with their national religious practices, and who would not entirely suppress every feeling of anxiety, gave to this wonderful phenomenon deep attention; and the more pure were their intentions, the more readily did they confess the Divine truth of the new religion. The religious zeal, therefore, which sprung up in the midst of paganism, in the middle of the second century, was most beneficial to Christianity, albeit the errors arising from this re-animation of a religious feeling, were, for a time, the rudest enemies with which it had to contend. But at the side of these errors and despite them, there appeared a better spirit, guiding men to primitive purity, and, therefore, to Christianity. Gross polytheism became every day more purified, and approached nearer to monotheism: it was more distinctly taught, and more generally believed, that there existed one Supreme Being, the creator and ruler of the universe, the author of all being, raised high above all other Gods, from whom these had received their existence, who acted as his agents, and governed for him the various parts of the world. Maximus of Tyre could, therefore, with reason assert, that whatever might be the diversity of opinions amongst men in matters of religion, all united in the belief of one God, the king and father of all things, and of other Gods, his sons, who ruled together with him. Even the oracles declared the God of the Hebrews to be the true God and the Creator of the universe.\* The people also, as Tertullian remarks in his Book on the Soul, often in their involuntary exclamations, unconsciously professed their belief in one

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\* St. Augustin has cited one of these oracles in his work "De Civ. Dei," xix. 22, from the collection of Porphyrius. Another, still more explicit, is found in St. Justin's "Cohortat. ad Græcos," p. 12. edit. Col.

“ Μουνοὶ Χαλδαῖοι σοφίην λαχόν, ἡδ’ ἄρ’ Ἑβραῖοι,  
 Αὐτογενήτων ἀνακτὰ σεβαζόμενοι θεὸν ἀγνώσ.”



Supreme God : as when they uttered these expressions, "If it please God—May God bless you—God beholdeth all things." The Christian writers have observed, moreover, that the pagans distinguished between this supreme Deity,—whom, when adoring, they turned towards the Heavens,—and the other inferior Gods, even when they offered sacrifice, and celebrated feasts in their honour.\* But the honours of Divine worship were reserved principally to Jupiter and Apollo, the latter of whom was revered as the reflection and representation of his father Zeus,—as his prophet, and as the mediator between him and mankind, who by his oracles manifested to mortals the will of God,† and was their Saviour who purified them from their stains and sins. Hence his appellations of *Alexikakos*, *Akesios*, *Apotropæos*. He had been man, had served as a slave, and had taken upon himself sufferings and pains.‡ How nearly does this approach to the Christian doctrines of the Son of God, and of His incarnation,—the mystery which brought knowledge, redemption, and salvation to man ! How easy was the transition from this dawning light of fables to the bright and glorious day of the gospel!§

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\* Prudentius, in his poem against the Sabellians, has said,  
 " Et quis in Idolio recubans, inter sacra mille,  
 Ridiculosque Deos venerans sale, cespitè, thure,  
 Non putet esse *Deum summum et super omnia solum*,  
 Quamvis Saturnis, Junonibus et Cytheræis,  
 Portentisque aliis fumantes consecret aras ?"

† Æschylus had said, "*Διος προφητης εστι Λοξιας πατρος.*"

‡ See Baur's "*Apollonius von Tyana und Christus.*" Tubing. 1832.

§ It will not be objected, that there appears a contradiction between that which has been said on the demoniacal character of polytheism, and that which is here said on its approximation to Christianity. Paganism had its better and its worse parts. Those who had not been entirely corrupted, adhered—not conscious, perhaps, of so doing—to the relics of religious traditions, which, although disfigured and falsified, retained some portion of their primitive noble form : others, on the contrary, remained attached to all that in polytheism flattered their senses—the worship of demons, the practice of magic, and all its abominations.

## SECTION VII.

OF THE OBSTACLES WHICH OPPOSED THEMSELVES TO  
THE PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY.\*

COLLECT, from amongst external accidental causes, and human impulses, all that concurred to favour and to accelerate the progress of Christianity, still you will confess, that without the cooperation of a higher, supernatural power, which reposed within the Church,—without the intervention of a special Divine Providence, the rapid and mighty advances of this religion must remain inexplicable. This will become more evident, if we contemplate the many impediments which rose up against it. We shall see the vast disproportion between the favouring circumstances and their opposites, which accompanied Christianity, and how feeble would have been all human means to effect this great revolution. Some modern writers, following the guidance of Gibbon, have asserted, that the diffusion of the gospel, and the final victory of the Church, is a phenomenon of history, that may be explained like many others, which may be attributed to natural concurring causes; but they deceived their readers by concealing from them the almost insurmountable obstacles which Christianity encountered upon its course,—by veiling from them the obstinate and general opposition that was raised against it by the reigning spirit, the manners and political institutions of the age. We will pause to consider the principal of these opposing elements.

1. High as we may trace the germ of the dissolution of the Greek and Roman polytheism, its moral impotence, and the general incredulity, it is yet true, that in

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\* The writings of the Apologists,—Justin, Athenagoras, Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Cyprian, Origen, Arnobius, and Lactantius.

Mamachi, *Orig. et Antiq. Christ.* tom. i. p. 71—186; Kartholt, *Paganus obtrectator*, Lubecæ, 1703; Huldrici, *Gentilis obtrectator*, Tigur. 1744; J. F. Gruner, *De Odio humani generis, Christianis olim objecto*, Coburgi, 1755.

the first ages of the Church, the mass of the people adhered to the worship of the Gods with an hereditary attachment,—that they sacrificed to them,—that they consulted their oracles, and celebrated their religious festivals with all the ancient pomp and solemnity. The influence of idolatry upon the minds of the people was much more powerful than can, perhaps, be imagined by us, who have been born and nurtured in the Church. There was a time in which idolatry exercised so mighty a rule over the minds even of the chosen people of God, that, illumined as they had been by the light of revelation, and continually warned by their prophets, they turned again and again to bend the knee before Baal, and to sacrifice to Moloch. Not only had Christianity to contend with first impressions, with education, and with the polytheistic prejudices of the pagans, imbibed with their mother's milk: this religious belief was declared to be the primitive belief of mankind, the origin of which was hidden in the night of antiquity, and under the protecting influence of which, nations had been formed, and cities built: the Christian religion had appeared as a novelty, when the pagan was confirmed in his conviction, that he was adhering to the traditions of his better and wiser fathers, and that his mode of worship could be the only one pleasing to the Gods, who had, as he thought, themselves established it on earth.\* The numberless oracles, the votive tablets in the temples, the wonders that had been performed, and were still performed, by the Gods—as the cures in the temple of Æsculapius in Epidaurus—all concurred to demonstrate to him the presence and power of his deities. To these he added the powerful incantations, the allurements of that art ever subservient to polytheism; the splendour and magnificence of his worship; the attractions of his festivals, that were celebrated with dances and games. What had Christianity to oppose to

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\* In their controversies with the Christians, the pagans in later times compared the recent origin of Christianity with the antiquity of their own religion, especially Julian, in his 53rd epistle to the people of Bostra, and in his writings against Christianity.



this, more than her then severe, almost dark, forms of religion,—her timid nocturnal assemblies,—her poverty, and the simplicity of her unadorned places of adoration?

2. We have observed above, that polytheism granted to its followers an unbounded liberty in the gratification of their inclinations. Voluptuousness, avarice, intemperance, and a cruel hardness of heart, prevented not the pagan from being a devout worshipper of the Gods, nor did he fear that he should lose their favour, whatever might be the state of his interior, as long as he assisted at the sacrifices, and performed the ordinary practices of religion. Christianity, on the contrary, announced itself to men, by requiring an immediate and entire change of sentiments: it told the pagan that he must resist his evil inclinations, that he must mortify his passions, that even an impure glance would exclude him from the kingdom of heaven: it told the revengeful, that he must pardon and love his enemies; the avaricious and rich, that it was almost impossible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Now if we consider, that, even under the empire of Christianity, there are men, who have grown up in the Church, and under the influence of the gospel too weak, too corrupted, to bring their conduct into harmony with their belief; that, despite the instructions which they have received from their infancy, they still gratify their inclinations, and yield to their passions, we shall learn how great must have been the impediments to the advance of the faith of Christ, presented by the purity and inexorable morality of the gospel.

3. With truth, then, may we say, that “in those times, and under these circumstances, Christianity had every interest against it, and none for it.” The spirit of paganism had grown into every branch of domestic and civil life: it was deeply rooted in the reigning manners and usages of the age: the united literature of Greece and Rome, and the instructions of the schools, bore the character of pantheism: the works of the most refined art, in the contemplation of which the

heathen lived, presented to him only objects drawn from the world of mythology and fable. Polytheism had insinuated itself into all the actions of life, especially of public life, more deeply than Christianity has ever done ; because, as it was void of all sense of morality, it could accommodate itself to all events and circumstances, however questionable their propriety might be. There existed in every part of the empire a numerous and far-spreading priesthood, connected by the ties of relationship with the highest families, and whose existence depended upon the preservation of idolatry : in every city there were artists and merchants, mechanics and labourers, who derived their subsistence from the worship of the Gods : those who provided the victims and the incense employed in the sacrifices,—who conducted the festivals and the public religious games which accompanied them,—who furnished the statues of the Gods and the ornaments of the temples,—all these saw in every attack upon paganism danger to their own emoluments ; and the assault of Demetrius, the silversmith of Ephesus, upon the apostles, was the prelude of future outrages of hatred against the Christians, animated by injured self-interest. Tertulian expressly mentions, that many of the pagans complained that the revenues of the temples diminished as the numbers of the Christians increased ; and if at length these men, raising themselves above all considerations of private emolument, approached towards Christianity, another and important difficulty met them on the way :—if they became members of the Church, they must renounce their employments in the service of the Gods, and seek to open for themselves new sources of subsistence. By still more powerful ties were they withheld from Christianity, who bore any of the public offices. In this capacity they were compelled to swear fidelity to the state by the Gods of paganism : they must perform the sacrifices, or assist at the offering ; they must preside at the celebration of the games :—in a word, how many functions were connected with their stations, which, as Christians, they must utterly renounce ?

4. But not only for these—for every pagan, there were found in the profession of Christianity almost invincible difficulties, which met him at every step. All the pagan religions bore a popular and national character; but in the Roman empire the worship of the Gods, and the institutions connected with it, were most closely interwoven with the existence of the government, and were consequently of a nature entirely political. The centre of the empire, the City of the Seven Hills, had itself become an object of religious worship. The sacred pledges of its eternal duration and happiness were preserved with profound veneration: the oracles of the state, the Sibylline Books, were not consulted, as the Grecian oracles, upon private affairs; only the destinies of the Roman state, and the success of its enterprises, were sought therein. So intimately was the patriotism of the Roman united with his religious belief, that he could not resign the one and not seem to abjure the other; and he who should dare to forsake a religion that had been strengthened by an existence of centuries, by Rome's vast magnificence and empire, would appear at once treasonably to undermine the foundations of the state: he deprived, as far as in him lay, the Roman empire of the favour and protection of the Gods, and every true citizen must consider him as an enemy to the public good. Such was the deeply-rooted and widely-extended conviction, through which, as through a wall of brass, the heralds of the gospel had to break.

5. He who at this period sincerely embraced Christianity, saw himself brought into collision with paganism in every relation of life: he felt—when he had removed from that circle of habits which had become to him another nature, from that social intercourse in which he had hitherto lived—as if torn with all his fibres from his native soil; and nothing could appear to the pagan more melancholy, or more repugnant, than his idea of the life of a Christian. The Christian must become a stranger to all that constituted the recreation and joy of a pagan; he could take no part in the games, and



must absent himself from the fights of the gladiators: he was banished from the festivals celebrated in honour of the Gods,—from the social entertainments of pagan feasts; for he could not present himself at tables where intemperance presided, and at which libations were poured out to the Gods. Thus the existence of the Christian appeared a continual renunciation of all those pleasures in which other men delighted,—a continual denial of all that which gives value and joy to life: it appeared a savage existence, which had begun or would end in an entire hatred of mankind. Hence the idea of many of the idolaters, that the Christians—an obstinate race, always prepared for death—deprived themselves of these pleasures, that they might part with life more easily.\* And if we remember with what madness the mass of the people ran to the games of the circus and the fights of the arena (*panem et circenses*), we shall understand Tertullian, when he says, “that there were many more prevented from becoming Christians, by the thought of losing these sports, than by the fear of death.” So that when a pagan became a Christian, his absence from the games oftentimes first revealed his change to his friends.

The more Christianity emerged from its primitive obscurity, and, by its progress, drew to itself the attention of the heathens, the more violently was there manifested, in the majority of the pagan population, a spirit of hostility to the new religion and its professors,—a spirit which afterwards burst forth in the most cruel and bloody persecutions. If only a general persuasion, that the Christians were enemies to the national religion could inflame the rage of many, there were not wanting also particular complaints, serious accusations, and poisoned calumnies, which, working in turn upon the different classes of idolaters, nourished and increased their malice, sharpened the contempt of some and the

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\* “Sunt qui existiment Christianum expeditum morti genus ad hanc obstinationem abdicatione voluptatum erudiri, quo facilius vitam contemnant, amputatis quasi retinaculis ejus, ne desiderent quam jam supervacuam sibi fecerint.”—Tertull. de Spectaculis, c. 4.

hatred of others, against the disciples of Christ. We may enumerate the following results of this hatred.

1. As the Christians had renounced the worship of the heathen Gods, they were considered as contemners of all religion, and declared as *atheists*. St. Justin narrates, that at the very beginning of the Church, the Jews sent from Jerusalem messengers to spread far and wide the report that a new sect of atheism, namely, Christianity, had appeared. The pagans more easily gave credit to the calumny, as the Christians manifested a contempt for all that they deemed the true worship of the Gods, and as among them there were seen no emblems of religion, no temples, no statues, no altars, or sacrifices. No Christian ever entered the temples of the pagans; and as the faithful studiously avoided giving to their churches, when they possessed them, the name of temple, so in fact no two things could be more dissimilar than a Christian place of assembly, and a heathen temple. That the Christians possessed a sacrifice, was unknown by the pagan, who saw no Christian altar; or he refused to give the name of sacrifice to that in which the victim was visible only to the eyes of faith.\* Full of the persuasion that the Christians were atheists, and that those who had been accursed by the Gods, should be abhorred and destroyed by men, the assembled crowds were wont to exclaim to the governors and commanders, “*Αἶρε τοὺς ἀθεοὺς!*” Destroy the atheists!

2. Even those, who believed the declaration of the Christians, that they did honour and adore a God, were not more inclined to pity or to tolerate them. In early times the Romans had forbidden the introduction and practice of foreign religions, a prohibition that had been indeed frequently violated by the senate, which in the time of the republic introduced into Rome the worship of many stranger Gods. This interdict was difficult of observance, when so many countries and nations became part of the Roman empire; and Rome itself be-

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\* The apostate Julian reproached the Christians that they had no *θυσιαστήρια*; Julian well knew that they had both altar and sacrifice, —differing, indeed, from his heathen sacrifices and altars.

came an universal Pantheon, in which the most contradictory worships were practised side by side. This religious hospitality of the Romans, who made all the Gods their own, who erected altars even to unknown Deities, was in later ages lauded as a virtue by zealous pagans, who boasted that the people who worshipped all the Gods merited universal dominion. St. Augustin had reason then to say, that the Romans adored all the Gods, save one, that one whose worship excluded all others. It was, therefore, not to be expected that they would grant to Christianity that toleration which was extended to all other religions, even to Judaism. These various religions were, like that of ancient Rome, national institutions,—no one excluded the other; and he who adored the Gods of a foreign land was in nowise necessitated to abandon his own. Even the Jewish religion, which possessed indeed a character of exclusion, and so far differed essentially from polytheism, was yet an ancient national institution, and like the other religions, had, or rather had had, its temple and its sacrifices. But it was far otherwise with Christianity; here was nothing national: on the contrary, this religion, from its very origin, displayed at once its universal, its truly Catholic character, and sought not to conceal its resolve to triumph upon the ruins of all others. He who became a Christian thereby renounced all other religions, all other forms of worship: he became an enemy, a contemner of the Gods of his native land; he now considered them as no more than empty phantoms, as spirits of wickedness, or demons: he could not deny that his most ardent wish was to behold the entire destruction of polytheism; and as early as the reign of Trajan it had been remarked, that in proportion as the Christians increased, the temples and the altars of the Gods were abandoned. In the eyes of the idolaters, therefore, the Christians were no better than *public enemies*,\* against whom the utmost severity of

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\* Tertullian, Lactantius, and others, often mention this appellation given to the Christians. In an inscription, written during the persecution of Diocletian, we read, "Nomine Christianorum deleti qui rempublicam evertabant."



the law should be employed, who by their contempt of the Deities of the empire, who by their exertions to extend their own belief, and thereby to overthrow the religion of Rome, had forfeited all claim to justice, and to the protection of the laws of which they had declared themselves the enemies: against them any violence was just, and permitted. And although they might not, sometimes, be persecuted for their religion, their religious assemblies were never tolerated, for the suspicious tyranny of the emperors had prohibited all secret meetings, and those especially which were held for the purpose of religion: the emperor Trajan published a special decree against them: the Jews, whose religion was acknowledged by the state, were permitted, by particular privileges, to meet in their synagogues. If the Christians continued to assemble, in spite of these decrees, they were in consequence bitterly persecuted, as a seditious and obstinately disobedient race.

3. And who was he, for whose sake the Christians despised and abandoned the great and tutelar Gods of the Roman empire? A Jew, who in a remote corner of the earth, had led a wandering and inglorious life,—who had been rejected by his own nation, and condemned by the Romans to death,—a man who, notwithstanding his high pretensions, could not avert from himself the most ignominious of deaths, the death of slaves and of robbers. Thus did they discourse, who believed not in the crucified Jesus, for even in those days love and hatred, divine honours, and base insults, stood in strong contrast opposed; for he who did not surrender himself to the Saviour, saw in the Christian religion nought save an incomprehensible infatuation, a blind delusion, yea, an awful madness. He judged as did Celsus, who to make this madness evident, thus introduces a Christian discoursing with a pagan: “Believe firmly, that he of whom I speak to you, is indeed the Son of God, although he was bound and tortured in the most ignominious manner, was condemned to a most dishonourable death, and not many years ago suffered in public the most disgraceful punishments.” In the honour

which the Christians paid to the emblem of their redemption, the pagans could discover nothing but a senseless veneration of the sign of opprobrium and shame; and amused themselves by saying that the Christians adored that which they deserved to suffer.

4. On account of their separation from the religion of the state, the Christians were considered wicked and dangerous citizens, and this suspicion being once awakened, some attributed to them political designs and machinations to overthrow the government of the emperors. When they were heard to call Jesus their king, and to sigh for his kingdom, they were immediately accused of treason. It was in this manner that the Jews sought to destroy St. Paul and his companions, as if they had become the subjects of another king, and consequently the enemies of Cæsar. This suspicion that the Christians were enemies not only of the religion but also of the state and its rulers, became more strong, when they refused to the emperors that homage which was paid to them by the servile flattery of the time. They objected to address the emperors by the title of LORD, in the religious sense in which it was used by their adulators: they would not swear by the genius of the emperors; an oath deemed so sacred by the heathens, that they erected temples, and offered sacrifices to this genius, which they revered as a deity. When the idolaters made vows, and offered solemn prayers, and victims, for the safety of the emperors, the Christians alone took no part in them. All these circumstances drew down upon them the then dangerous accusation, that they were habitually guilty of high treason.

5. The more the persecuted Christians were compelled to hold their assemblies in secret, and during the stillness of the night, the more easily were the accusations, already industriously circulated, believed, that in their assemblies they perpetrated the most horrible crimes—crimes no less than murder, and the eating of their victims' flesh. The circumstances of these horrors were minutely narrated. A child,—thus their accusers

said,—was sprinkled with flour, and was presented to the person to be initiated: he, without knowing what he did, pierced it with a knife: the blood of the murdered infant was then drunk, the flesh was eaten, and men bound themselves together in union by this cruel sacrifice. The belief, that the Christians eat the flesh of men, arose from the little knowledge which the pagans had acquired of the holy sacrifice; they had heard that in the secret assemblies, the Christians received the flesh of Christ under the appearance of bread, and drank his blood. According to St. Justin and Origen, the Jews, who knew better the nature of the Eucharist, spread this deformed report of the Christian doctrine and practices among the pagans, who, ready to believe the worst of the enemies of their Gods, received the calumny, and further exaggerated it, according to their own ideas.

In comparison with these, the other crimes imputed to the Christians were of slight importance. It was objected to them, that they were useless members of the body of the state,—idle and unfit for public affairs, as they always sought to avoid public employments,—whilst, by a strange contradiction, they were accused of being a dangerous faction of conspirators, prepared for the most desperate attempts, and of using mysterious signs, by which they recognized each other. Even the miracles, which the Omnipotent worked through them, were employed as arms against them. As their master, by his skill in magic, had allured and attached to himself numbers of men, so now, said the pagans, his disciples and followers, by their formulas of incantation, produced similar delusions: the fortitude, also, with which they bore torments and the pangs of death in the presence of the judges, was attributed to arts equally impure and unholy.\*

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\* All the apologists speak of this accusation, which was that most frequently made against the Christians. Celsus particularly mentions, "that all the power, which they seemed to possess, must be attributed to the names and invocations of certain spirits." He assures us (and of what does he not assure us?) that he had found, in the possession of



## SECTION VIII.

THE UNION OF ALL CLASSES OF MEN IN THEIR  
HATRED OF CHRISTIANITY.—THE  
NEOPLATONIC SCHOOLS.

HENCE it would seem, that Christianity was viewed by the heathens as no more than a compound of foolishness, absurdity, and wickedness, and that their judgment of the Christians was this: “a Christian is a man capable and guilty of every crime, an enemy to the Gods, to the emperor, to morality, and to all nature.”\* The mere name of Christian was sufficient to draw hatred upon him who bore it; and when in the days of Tacitus, the Christians were accused of hating all mankind, they could then, and in later times, have declared with truth, that the hostility of the whole human race was turned upon them; and with justice might they have applied to themselves those words of the apostle, “we are made as the refuse of this world, the off-scouring of all, even till now.”† For then, indeed, a spirit of hatred animated all classes of men, and how different soever might be the education, the rank, the employment, and the manner of life of the various subjects of the Roman empire,—in their detestation of the gospel, and in their animosity towards the followers of Jesus Christ, all were equal and alike.

The *mass of the people* considered them as a body

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some priests, certain books containing the forms of incantation (βιβλία βαρβαρα, δαιμονων ονοματα έχοντα και τερατειας). Origen replies: “It is well known, that the Christians, when they heal diseases or expel demons, employ not the names and incantations of spirits, but only the name of Jesus Christ.” The expression before used by Suetonius in his life of Nero, that the Christians were *genus hominum superstitionis maleficæ*, refers to this idea of the pagans. When during the sufferings of the Christian martyrs, wonders occurred, as when the flames harmed them not or were extinguished, these also were declared the effect of magic. From this accusation we learn that the heathens did not deny the reality of these miracles.

\* Tertull. Apol. c. 2.

† 1 Cor. iv. 13.

of miserable beings, who not only were loaded with the indignation of the Gods, whom they despised, but who were also the cause of the vengeance of the offended powers of heaven, upon the lands where these impious men resided. To them, therefore, were attributed all the calamities with which the provinces of the empire were at that period so heavily afflicted. Was there an inundation or an earthquake; did famine or plague cause men to tremble; then burst forth the fury of the populace against the enemies of the Gods, and many a Christian fell a victim to their rage: the crowded seats of the amphitheatre rung with a thousand-tongued voice: "To the lions! Away with them to the lions!" The governors, who were unwilling to risk their popularity in favour of the hated Christians, yielded to the shouts of the people, and often without even the forms of justice, the Christians were delivered to immediate death to appease the blood-thirst of a populace.

Without these external demonstrations of hatred, the *emperors* and the *magistrates*, even the better and the wiser, were not less hostile to Christianity. The more it became evident that the Roman empire was then a decaying edifice, which bore within itself the cause of its own ruin, the more suspicious and severe they became towards those who appeared ready to raise their hands against it to accelerate its fall; but their suspicions and severity were more violent against the Christians, who attacked the very foundations of the empire—its religion; and who by their open and obstinate resistance, presented a dangerous example of contempt to the majesty of the laws. The introduction and toleration of foreign religions, had already been considered an evil by those statesmen who followed the strict notions of their Roman fathers; how much greater an evil would be the introduction of Christianity, which would not consent to stand at the side of other religions, but aimed to destroy them all, and to triumph in their destruction! It required only a slight knowledge of Christianity to perceive, that, sooner or later, it would create an entire revolution in the moral relations of the

nations, as well as of the individuals who embraced it, and that, consequently, the institutions, the laws, and manners, which had hitherto given to society its character and form in the Roman empire, would fall beneath the victorious spirit of the gospel. When therefore they exerted every effort to suppress the enemy, which threatened destruction to their idol, the Colossus of the Roman dominion, they acted in conformity with an idea expressed by a statesman and historian of their own times, Dio Cassius, who makes Mecænas thus speak to Augustus: "Pay honour to the Deity at all times and in all places according to the customs and laws of your fathers, and compel others so to honour them. Detest and punish those who introduce novelties in religion, not only on account of the Gods, but also because these introducers of new divinities bring with them innovations in manners, which lead to conspiracies, associations, and assemblies, that are dangerous to the monarchy."

The powerful body of the *jurisconsults* also threw the whole weight of their influence into the scale against the Christians. They, to whom the guardianship and maintenance of the laws, and the care of "divine and human things"\* were entrusted, saw in the old religion an element necessary to the integrity of the state, which was to be preserved at any cost, and if need should be, by the infliction of the severest punishments. To this infliction of punishment they often excited the emperors and their governors; and that every proconsul and civil authority might know what chastisements were provided by the laws for those who despised the Gods, a learned lawyer, Domitius Ulpianus,† in the third century, collected all the decrees of the emperors on this subject.

With proud disdain *the rich and the great* looked down upon the new religion and its adherents; these were no other than men of low degree, artisans, and

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\* The Roman definition of jurisprudence, "Divinarum atque humanarum rerum notitia."

† Lact. Inst. v. 14.



slaves. Here was reason sufficient to cause them to despise this religion. The idea of becoming a member of a society in which the free, the rich, and the powerful, stood not above the lowest slave, was, to the haughty Roman, intolerable. The learned and those who pretended to be learned, found in the books of the prophets a rude and tasteless style ; it appeared to them foolishness to rank Galilean fishermen before the divine Plato, Epicurus, and Aristippus ; and when they heard that these poor fishermen declared that their master was born of a virgin, and that they preached the resurrection of the dead, the Gospel afforded to them matter for ridicule ; it might, they thought, be proposed to women and slaves, not to men of learning and understanding. From this class of men in particular came the objection, that that religion could not be true which made its members miserable and melancholy ; that a God, who did not protect his adorers from the most awful sufferings, must be either powerless or unjust ;—an objection that sprung from the spirit of paganism, which knew no happiness above this earth, and which measured the favour of its Gods by temporal benefits, by earthly happiness and power. Hence the remark of Aristotle, that the fortunate are always more zealous than the miserable in the service of the Gods.

The troops of *pagan priests*, and all who lived by the temples, the sacrifices, and the festivals, were by birth enemies to Christianity, and exercised all their influence with the people to infuriate them against it. A similar hostility was shewn by those who had at heart the preservation of the heathen mysteries ; and the presidents of the Eleusian rites at Athens, therefore, commanded proclamation to be made at the beginning of each celebration, “ If there be here an atheist, an Epicurean, or a Christian, let him depart.” After these came that multitude whose occupation was to gratify the taste of the times for magic and divination, sorcerers, soothsayers, astrologers, and enchanter. Since the days of Simon Magus these men had considered the Christians as their enemies, and their animosity was an effect of that hos-

tility that had been placed between the serpent and the seed of the woman. The presence of a Christian was sufficient to impede their operations, and, therefore, wherever they possessed influence, either with the multitude, or with powerful individuals, they employed it to ruin the Christians. The prince of the magicians of Egypt, who initiated the emperor Valerian in the horrid mysteries of magic, and who persuaded him to offer children in sacrifice, and to seek future destinies in the entrails of slaughtered new-born infants, instigated him cruelly to persecute the Christians, whom he had before favoured, because “they prevented the effects of his awful enchantments.”\*

Finally, the various *Schools of pagan philosophy* were arrayed against the religion of Christ. The doctrines and practices of the Epicureans, the Cynics, and the Stoics, would necessarily make them enemies to this holy religion; and whenever a heathen philosopher became a Christian, rarely did it happen that he passed from any one of these three sects. Even those who believed not in the multitude of the Gods, who despised them, and the many forms of their worship, had not on that account approached nearer to Christianity. Purity of morals, humility, and religious feeling, were found in any place more easily than in the schools of the philosophers. Towards the end of the second, and the commencement of the third century, the most celebrated sects of ancient philosophy exhibited symptoms of approaching dissolution: they could, therefore, offer only weak impediments to the progress of Christianity, which was then advancing onwards with the firm step of vigorous youth. But there now arose another school, which from its first beginnings announced itself as a reform and support of the ancient faith, and, consequently, as an enemy of the new religion. This was the Neoplatonic school of Alexandria, founded by Ammonius Saccas and Plotinus, and which was afterwards represented by Porphyrius, Amelius, and Iamblicus. The doctrine of

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\* Dionys. Alex. apud Eusebium, vii. 10.

this school was the last, and in many respects the best production of paganism, now in its final struggle; the effort of a society, which acknowledged its own defects, to regenerate and to purify itself. Philosophy, and the religion of the vulgar, hitherto separated and irreconcilable, joined in harmony together for mutual support, and for a new existence. The Neoplatonics endeavoured, therefore, to unite the different systems of philosophy, especially the Pythagorean, Platonic, and Aristotelean, in one body with the principles of oriental learning, and thus to raise an edifice of universal, absolute truth. In the same manner they represented the varied forms of eastern and western religious worship as one entire whole, which had manifested itself indeed in different ways, but at the foundation of which there lay the same true faith. They taught that "every kind of homage and adoration, which men offer to superior beings, is referred to heroes, demons, or Gods, but, finally, to the one most-high God, the author of all: that these demons are the chiefs and genii of the different parts, elements, and powers of the world, of people, countries, and cities, to obtain whose favour and protection, it behoved men to honour them according to the rites and customs of the ancients." It is, therefore, manifest that these philosophers were essentially hostile to the Christian religion,—the exclusive character of which, and tendency to destroy all other religions, stood in direct contrast with their doctrines: and as their school was in its vigour at the very time in which Christianity made its most rapid advances, and had struck paganism with a mortal wound, they employed themselves especially, and more earnestly than other philosophers, to maintain their own tenets, and to destroy Christianity. They in nowise, however, desired to defend heathenism, or its worship, in their then degenerate and degrading state: their ideal was a more pure, more noble, spiritualized, polytheism, to establish which was the object which they had proposed to themselves. Whilst, therefore, on the one hand, they preserved the ancient and genuine truths which had sprung from primitive tradition, and purified



them from recent errors and deformations; on the other, they adopted many of the doctrines of the hated Christianity, and sought to reform paganism by the aid of light which had streamed upon them from the sanctuary of the Church. This admission and employment of Christian truths are easily explained, if it be true, that two of their chiefs, Ammonius and Porphyrius, had been Christians. It is well known that they received instructions from Christian masters; their writings bear evidence of a more than superficial knowledge of the Scriptures; and in fact, Christianity had then become a power of the first order in the intellectual world, nor could its most determined enemies avoid the influence of Christian ideas. As the emperor Julian, who was a disciple of this school, endeavoured to uphold the falling edifice of paganism by applying to it many of the institutions of Christianity, so did these philosophers of the third century employ the same principles to purify polytheism, and to conceal its deformity. This uniformity, or imitation, consists not only in the use of terms,\* but in essential dogmas. The Neoplatonic idea of three hypostases in one Godhead would not have been heard of, if the Christian doctrine of the Trinity had not preceded it; and if the philosophers of this school express themselves, upon this subject, sometimes obscurely and at others unintelligibly, this was occasioned partly by their taking the Christian dogma only as a point whence to start, wishing to explain it according to their own conceptions, and partly by their pantheistic errors, from which they could not entirely divest themselves.† Their doctrines respecting the minor Gods,

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\* Nothing is more frequent with them than the expressions, unknown to ancient philosophy, of “σωτηρ, ανακαινωτικς, παλιγγενεσια, φωτισμος.” They employ the word *αγγελος* in a purely Christian sense. The parallel passages from the writings of Porphyrius, and the New Testament, collected by Ullman, make this more evident. See also Mosheim, *Diss. de Studio Ethnicorum Christianos imitandi*, in *Dissert. ad Hist. Eccl. pertinent*.

† Amelius, the scholar of Plotinus, when speaking of the Word (*λογος*) alludes to the Gospel of St. John: “Και οὗτος ἄρα ἦν ὁ *λογος* καθ’ ὃν αἰεὶ ὄντα τι *γενομένα* ἐγίνετο, ὥς ἂν καὶ ὁ Ἡρακλεῖτες ἀζώσσει, καὶ νη

their influence and connexion with the supreme Being, approached near to the Christian dogma of the angels. Nor is the influence of Christianity less evident in the pure and grave morality of the Neoplatonics: in their lessons which teach the purifying of fallen souls, the detachment from the senses, the *crucifying* (προσηλωσις) of the affections and passions, it is easy to distinguish the Christian, from the commingled pagan, elements.

The Neoplatonics endeavoured to reform polytheism by giving to men a doctrine more pure concerning the Gods, by attributing an allegorical sense to the fables, and a moral signification to the forms and ceremonies of religion: they sought to raise the souls of men to piety, and rejected from their mythology many of the degrading narrations with which it had before abounded. It was their desire also to abolish the sacrifices, for the Gods could only abhor the slaughter, the dismemberment and the burning of animals. But at the same time they reduced to a theory the apparitions of the Gods; they declared magic to be the most divine of sciences; they taught and defended theurgy, or the art of invoking the Gods, (those of an inferior order, who were united to matter), and of compelling them to comply with the desires of men. With what arms they warred against Christianity we shall see hereafter.

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Δι' ὃν ὁ ΒΑΡΒΑΡΟΣ αἰετοὶ ἐν τῇ τῆς ἀρχῆς ταξεί τε καὶ ἀξίᾳ καθεστή-  
κοτα πρὸς θεὸν εἶναι, καὶ θεὸν εἶναι." Apud Euseb. Præp. Evang. xi. 19.  
The *Barbarian*, as Eusebius remarks, is St. John. St. Augustin also  
shews, Conf. vii. 10; De Civ. Dei, x. 29; that in the writings of the  
Platonics, we can find the doctrine of the Logos, the Son of the Father,  
but nothing of the Incarnation. The influence of this Christian dogma  
upon the heathens is shown in a more distinct manner in the discourse  
of the rhetorician Aristides upon the Goddess Athena, in which he  
transfers to this divinity all the attributes by which Christians designate  
Jesus the Son of God. He says, for example, that Athena (Minerva)  
is of the nature of God, that without her God made nothing; that she  
sits at the right hand of the Father; that she is greater than all the  
angels, and is the Divine wisdom.

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## SECTION IX.

THE PERSECUTIONS UNDER THE EMPERORS, FROM  
NERO TO MAXIMINUS.\*

THE emperor Nero was the first of the Roman princes who persecuted the Church. To avert from himself the odium of having caused the conflagration which reduced one third part of the imperial city to ashes, he cast it upon the already despised and hated Christians; of whom, says Tacitus, he under this pretext put a *vast multitude* to death. Of these, some were clothed in the skins of beasts and were thus worried by dogs; others were crucified; and many, being covered with inflammable materials, were placed upon the public ways to burn as torches amidst the darkness of the night. Even Tacitus, who condemns the Christians as guilty, and worthy of punishment, and who represents them as the most odious of men on account of their crimes,—which however, he does not mention,—applauds not, but reprobates, the cruelty of the tyrant, and adds, that guilty as were the sufferers, their torments excited compassion. His accusations are no more than an echo of the popular fury, for he knew less of the Christians than of the Jews, of whom he recounts in his history the most absurd and calumniating fables.

To the repose enjoyed by the Christians under Vespasian and Titus, there succeeded a second persecution under Domitian, (81-96). According to Dio Cassius, the consul, Flavius Clemens, father-in-law of the emperor, was accused of impiety and Jewish superstition (the

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\* Tacitus, Suetonius, Dio Cassius, Scriptores Historiæ Augustæ.—Eusebius; Lactantius, de Mortibus Persecutorum; Ruinart, Acta Martyrum sincera; Baronius; the Bollandists; Surius; Martyrologium Romanum.

Kortholdt, De Persecut. Eccles. Primævæ; Peverelli, Istoria delle Persecuzioni nei primi 4 secoli; Balduini Comment. ad edicta Princip. Rom. de Christianis; Dodwell, Dissert. de paucitate Martyrum in Diss. Cypranicis; and opposed to this, Ruinart's Præfat. ad Acta MM. sincera, &c. &c.



two appellations given to the Christian religion), and was condemned with many others to death. Flavia Domitilla, the wife of Flavius, was banished to the island of Pandataria; and others suffered the loss of their estates. The suspicious tyrant had been informed that the Christians and Jews were in expectation of the earthly kingdom of the Messias, and that many of his family, descended from the ancient kings of Israel, were yet existing in Judea: he therefore caused all of the family of David to be sought for in Palestine. Two nephews of the apostle St. Jude were apprehended and conducted to Rome. But, when before the emperor, they declared their poverty, and exhibited their swollen hands, to convince him that by their labour they earned their bread, he dismissed them with scorn. It is supposed that he suspended the persecution a short time before his death. The exaction of the Jewish poll-tax was another mode of persecution employed against the Christians. From this they were freed by Domitian's successor, Nerva, who would no more permit the accusations of impiety and Jewish superstition to be employed against them.

The too short reign of Nerva was followed by the cruel rule of Trajan (98-117). He issued indeed no edicts against the Christians, as Christians, but his decrees against secret societies, and his laws for the preservation of the ancient religion of the state, were turned against them; and with how great and arbitrary cruelty, we learn from the narrative of the younger Pliny to the emperor. In his capacity of governor of Bithynia, he had to decide the doom of many, who, as Christians, were arraigned at his tribunal. As he had never assisted at the examination of the Christians, and as no law defined their punishment, he was eager to obtain a decision from Trajan. He had, however, condemned and punished many who had continued obstinate in the profession of their religion, and had put to the torture two female slaves, who were deaconesses among the Christians, that he might obtain from them accurate information of their superstition. All that he

could extort however from them, and from others, whom the fear of torments had caused to fall from their faith, was the declaration, that the Christians were accustomed to assemble, on appointed days, before the setting of the sun, to sing hymns to Jesus Christ, as to their God; that they had bound themselves by oath to commit no crimes, not to invade the property of others, to be faithful to their marriage vows, not to violate their plighted word, and to restore goods deposited with them;\* that they then separated, but met again in the evening at an innocent repast, and that this usage had been omitted since the edicts against secret assemblies. Pliny wished to be informed, whether he should make a distinction between youth and age, or whether children should be punished with the same severity as men? whether those who renounced Christianity should be freed from all penalty? and lastly, whether Christians should be punished as such, or only on account of other crimes connected with their superstition? Trajan, in his answer, approved of the proceedings of his representative: he replied, that search for the Christians should not be made; but when they were presented to him, they should be punished. He imagined that Christianity was one of those superstitions which pass with time and the love for novelty: but, that an open profession of a fanaticism, which was united with a contempt of the religion of the state, should not continue unnoticed. Thus were the Christians subjected to the caprice of their enemies, and the widest field opened for accusations against them and their faith.

The Jews at Jerusalem sacrificed to their hate of the Christian name, the bishop of that city, Simeon the son of Cleophas. He was, according to the flesh, related to our blessed Saviour, and was now a venerable old man of 120 years. At the command of the Roman governor of Syria, who had been instigated by the Jews, he was nailed to a cross. The holy Ignatius, bishop of Antioch,

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\* This was probably a renewal of the baptismal vows, and was more ample than it is here expressed. Pliny could not understand the other declarations which were purely Christian.

was blessed also at this time with a glorious death. The emperor, whilst on his expedition against the Parthians, in 106, caused him to be apprehended, and loaded him with the severest reproaches. The aged saint answered unmoved the accusations of the emperor, that he was a wicked demon, who despised the laws and conducted others into misery, in these words: "The name, wicked demon, cannot be applied to a servant of God, who beareth Jesus in his heart." As he persisted in declaring that there was only one true God, and that the Gods of the pagans were indeed demons, sentence was pronounced upon him by the emperor, that he should be conveyed to Rome, there to be made the sport of the people, and the food of wild beasts. With joy the holy bishop went to the scene of his sufferings and glory, and was met on his way by bishops, priests, and laics, who came to see and hear him. Scarcely had he arrived in Rome, before he was conducted to the amphitheatre; he kneeled and prayed for the welfare of the Church, and for the cessation of the persecution; his prayers were met by the populace with shouts of execration. Two hungry lions were let loose upon him, and instantly devoured him, leaving only the larger bones. "I shall be ground," he had before said, "by the teeth of wild beasts, that I may be made a worthy fruit of Jesus Christ." The brethren collected with care the relics that remained, and conveyed them to Antioch. Companions and witnesses of his sufferings have described them with tender feeling, and thus conclude their narration: "We have made known to you the day of his death, that yearly we may assemble to celebrate his memory, in the hope that we may become partners in his glory."

The emperor Adrian (117-138), although an enthusiast for the idolatry of Rome, exhibited a spirit less hostile to the Christians. He protected them against the fury of the people, and when the frequent excesses of this fury were made known to him by Serrenius Granianus, proconsul of Asia, he directed to the succeeding proconsul, Minucius Fundanus, a rescript, in



which he ordained that only those Christians who should be arraigned and condemned according to the laws, should be executed, and that all false accusers should be punished. We may suppose that the writings of Quadratus and Aristides, who addressed the emperor in favour of their brethren, won from him this protection. Lampridius reports that Adrian had even admitted Christ into the number of his Gods, and that he had built temples without idols, that he might place therein the statue of Jesus, but was diverted from this purpose by the machinations of the priests. He indeed built the temples which gave origin to this rumour, but they were left without Gods, not to receive the statues of Christ, but of the emperor.

Antoninus Pius (138-161), the lover of mankind, seems to have been personally favourable to the Christians. He sent rescripts to some of the Greek cities, and communities of the Hellenists, directing them to protect the Christians against the wild fury of the populace. Many, however, suffered death during his reign, and amongst them Publius, bishop of Athens. Marcus Aurelius (161-180), the adopted son and successor of Antoninus, was, notwithstanding his stoic philosophy, so zealous an adorer of the Gods, that he excited the ridicule, even of the pagans, by the number of the sacrifices which he offered before his expedition against the Marcomanni. He was therefore not disposed to protect the Christians, whose rapidly increasing numbers seemed to threaten the religion of the state:—on the contrary, the persecution began again to rage, and more furiously than before. The emperor published severe decrees against them; proceedings were no longer conducted according to the regulations of Trajan; searches were made; the unhappy victims of persecution were most cruelly tortured before condemnation, and, when steadfast in their faith, barbarous and awful was the death to which they were often doomed;—they were crucified, burned, or thrown to wild beasts. When this hostile spirit of the emperor became known to the governors of the provinces, they immediately yielded to

the people, who cried for blood. That there might not be wanting victims to be sacrificed to this ardour for slaughter, was amply provided by those informers who coveted the riches of the Christians, and of whose cruel oppressions and accusations, Melito, bishop of Sardes, complains in his address to the emperor. We have more precise accounts of the persecutions at Smyrna, in 167, and at Lyons and Vienne, in 177. At Smyrna, the proconsul, Statius Quadratus, commanded that the Christians should be led into the amphitheatre, where every species of torture was inflicted on them. They were scourged until their veins became visible, and were then thrown upon pointed shells. All, except one, who had rashly exposed himself to the torture, continued firm in their profession of belief in the true God, nor was a sigh heard to escape from them amidst all the horrors of their torments. They were in the end devoured, some by fire, others by wild beasts. To gratify the populace, search was made for the aged Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who was then in his ninetieth year. He was found, interrogated, and when he refused to curse his Saviour, and to swear by the fortune of the emperor, he was condemned to the flames. The venerable saint approached them with joy and with a prayer of thanksgiving. The flames injured him not, but curved over him like the sail of a ship swollen by the wind. He died, being pierced through the body by the executioner.

The persecution at Lyons and Vienne was occasioned also by a tumult of the people, and was the more cruel, as several slaves of Christian masters, to escape the torture, declared that the Christians were guilty, in their assemblies, of the crimes imputed to them. The Roman governor participated in the blinded fury of the people, and commenced his examinations with the torture. Many of the Christians fled: against those who remained, fire and the sword, and wild beasts, were alternately employed. But the most horrid torments could extort from the sufferers only these words, "I am a Christian,—there is nothing wicked in our reli-

gion." Blandina, a young maiden, whom the sight of torments seemed at first to intimidate, but who afterwards persevered steadfastly in the profession of her faith, was, after long protracted tortures, fastened to a wild bull, and dragged to death. The aged bishop Photinus was scourged, and bound, and cast into prison, where he died. Nor could the bodies of the martyrs escape the fury of their enemies : they were disinterred, and cast to be devoured by dogs and birds of prey, and guards were placed to prevent the burying of the dead. An address was transmitted to Marcus Aurelius, requesting his instruction with regard to the Roman citizens who were languishing in the prisons. The emperor commanded that all who persisted in their obstinacy should be punished with death. His will was fully, cruelly executed.

We can imagine, that, under these repeated, unceasing, soul-rending tortures, some would lose their fortitude, and deny their faith ; but many of these fallen ones returned again to the Church, and sealed their fidelity with their blood. These penitents were received again with paternal charity by those Christians, with whom they became associated in prison, and supplications were offered for them to the Lord, that he would mercifully support them in their conflicts.

In Rome, the persecution reached its height in the years 167 and 168. St. Justin, who had addressed his second apology to the emperor, was apprehended, at the instigation of the philosopher Crescens, subjected to examination, and condemned to death. With him many others were interrogated by the prefect, "Are you Christians?" and if they replied in the affirmative, the sentence followed, "Come and sacrifice, or I will subject you to torments without mercy." If they obeyed not, death ensued : they were first scourged, and then beheaded.

In the wars of Marcus Aurelius with the Marcomanni and Quadi, in 174, there occurred an event which should have subdued the severity of the emperor towards his Christian subjects. Enclosed with his army, burning



with heat and thirst, upon a waterless desert, he beheld destruction before him, when suddenly a copious shower of rain descended ; whilst a furious storm disconcerted the triumphing enemy, and gave an easy victory to the Romans. This deliverance was ascribed by the Christians to the prayers of their brethren in the army, especially of one legion, which was said to have been composed entirely of Christians, and which, from this event, was named the "thundering legion." However this may be, it is certain that there were many Christian soldiers in this legion, and that the Almighty hearkened to the prayers uttered by them in their distress. That this occurrence did not mitigate the persecution is evident, from the decree against the Christians at Lyons, which was issued three years later.

Under Commodus (180-192) an interval of repose was granted to the Church. The emperor passed no new decrees against the Christians, but preceding edicts were sometimes enforced. Thus the learned senator Apollonius was judged and condemned at Rome for his faith, and with him, the slave who accused him. When Arrius Antoninus, the proconsul of Asia, commenced his persecution, all the Christians of the city presented themselves before him, in the hope that their numbers would move him to mercy. The proconsul condemned some to death : to the others he exclaimed in scorn, "Ye miserable ones, if you wish to die, have you not rocks whence you may cast yourselves down, or cords by which you may hang yourselves ?" During the civil war which followed the assassination of Commodus, the Christians were sacrificed at the will of the multitude, and how cruelly, especially in the east, we learn from the words of Clement of Alexandria :—"Daily do we behold many martyrs burned, crucified, or beheaded, before our eyes."

The succeeding emperor, Septimius Severus, (193-211) had been healed by a Christian of a painful disease, and was therefore, in the beginning of his reign, favourable to the Christians, many of whom among the highest ranks, he protected from the fury of the people.

But indications of a change in the mind of the emperor began soon to appear : a law, published in 202, forbade all persons to embrace the Christian or Jewish religion under penalty of the severest punishment. This law might appear as a modification of former decrees, as it was not directed against those who had previously professed the faith : but it required only an intimation from the emperor to reawaken all the fury of the enemies of Christianity. Nor did Severus confine his punishments to those who passed to the Christian religion ; for when he was in Egypt, he caused many Christians to be examined and executed : among them was Leonidas, the father of Origen. The virgin Photiniana, in 207, after enduring the horrors of the torture, was thrown into a vessel of boiling pitch : the warrior Basilides, who conducted her to execution, was converted by her, and suffered death after a few days. In Africa, many Christians suffered decapitation at Scitilla, in the year 200, by order of the proconsul. Most affecting is the narrative of the martyrdom of the two young virgins, Perpetua and Felicitas, and their companions, Revocatus, Secundulus, Saturninus, and Satur, who joined himself to them during their sufferings. When they were cast into their dungeons at Carthage, they had not been baptized, for they were in the class of the catechumens, but they received the sacrament of regeneration in prison. The impression which their cheerful confidence wrought upon the mind of their jailor, Prudens, was so powerful, that it effected his conversion. Perpetua, after she had withstood the tears of her father, and the threats of the governor, who sought to compel her to sacrifice for the emperors, was, together with her companions, condemned on the festival which was celebrated in honour of the nomination of the young Geta to the imperial dignity. They were sentenced to be torn to pieces by wild beasts in the amphitheatre. According to the Roman custom, they were feasted in public on the evening which preceded their combat. With wonder did the assembled multitudes gaze upon the calm and cheerful bearing of the martyrs ; and when

Satur addressed them, saying, "Look upon us well now, that you may know us again on the day of judgment," a thrill of awe ran through them, and many there and then declared themselves Christians. When the holy sufferers had been wounded and torn by the beasts, they were brought into the centre of the amphitheatre to die before the people: they embraced each other with the kiss of peace, and received, tranquilly and joyfully, the stroke of death.

Under Caracalla (211-217), the son of Severus, the persecution continued to rage for several years; but days of peace began to dawn in the year 219, when the two nephews of the empress Julia, the wife of Severus, successively attained the supreme command of the empire. Heliogabalus (219-222), a native of Syria, sought to propagate universally the adoration of his Syrian God, the sun, whose name and priesthood he bore, and wished therefore to unite with it the worship of the Roman Gods, the Jewish, Samaritan, and Christian religions. With this view, he tolerated the Christians; but would, had he lived, in all probability, have persecuted them, on account of the resistance which they must naturally have opposed to his designs of amalgamation. His uncle and successor, Alexander Severus (222-235), was like his mother, who called Origen to her court, and is thought to have been a Christian, favourable to the long-persecuted religion. In his private oratory, in which he daily performed his morning devotions, he placed by the side of Orpheus and Apollonius of Tyana, the statues of Abraham and of Jesus Christ, to whom he had intended to erect a temple in Rome. Those words of our Lord, "What you wish not that other men should do to you, do not to them," were engraven upon the entrance of his palace and other public edifices; and in a new regulation for the appointment of civil authorities, he took as his guide the prudence of the Christians in the election of their bishops.

Thus had the Christians enjoyed a peace of twenty years, and had begun to build churches, when, after the murder of the noble Alexander, the rude Thracian, Max-



imin, assumed the government of the empire (235-238). In hatred to his predecessor, he persecuted the Christians, especially the bishops and priests. Awful earthquakes followed, which served only to provoke a more deadly hate in the people against the Church. The tyrant was, however, soon slain by his own soldiers, and the Arab Philip, who ruled from 244 to 249, displayed so kindly a spirit towards the Christians, that he is thought to have been one himself. Eusebius relates, without indeed confirming his relation, that at Antioch, on the eve of Easter, he wished to take part in the solemn mysteries of the Christian religion, but was rejected by the bishop Babylas on account of his cruelties, (he had caused the death of the young emperor, Gordian,) until he should have performed a canonical penance, and that he submitted to this public humiliation. But in public, at the celebration of the Roman secular festival, he showed himself still an idolater.

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## SECTION X.

CONTINUATION: THE PERSECUTIONS UNDER DECIUS,  
VALERIAN, AND DIOCLETIAN.

BLOODY as had been the persecutions already described, they had not borne upon them the appearance of a design for the universal destruction of Christianity. The more humane among the emperors, such as Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, did not dread from Christianity the ruin of the public religion; they considered it no more than a fanaticism, which would pass away as others had passed; and if they permitted some Christians to be condemned, it was to terrify others, and to declare that they would not suffer the religion of the state to be contemned with impunity. The tyrants, Domitian, Caracalla, and Maximin, were instigated by their love of blood to torment and afflict them; or they had, as had Maximin, personal motives for their cruelty;

the rest was the work of particular governors, or of the people, incited by the priests or by public calamities. In the reign of Philip, Origen,—who compared the number of those who suffered with those who remained unharmed, and found the number of the former to be in proportion small,—could say, “in these days there are few, and their number can be counted, who have shed their blood for their faith, for God has interrupted the war of slaughter against the Christians.” That the number of those heroes of Christianity who had died martyrs to their faith was *in itself* not small, but that on the contrary it amounted to *many thousands*, history speaks too distinctly to leave a doubt upon our minds; but if it had been intended by the persecutions to annihilate the Christian name, to destroy the Church, then this number might have been called small, had it even surpassed ten times its actual amount. This is the true signification of these often misunderstood words of Origen.\*

During the long interval of peace, interrupted only by the short reign of Maximin, enjoyed by the Christians, the number of their churches, and the numbers of members in them, were greatly increased; many of the heathen prejudices had been removed or weakened by an acquaintance of two hundred years with the Christian religion; the idea of the sanguinary banquets of the faithful had been lost, or was retained, as Origen declares, only by the zealots of idolatry, or by the ignorant populace. But with peace, there came also into the Church a cooling of its primitive love; many worldly-minded men, who, in the days of persecution, stood at a distance from the Church, now entered in, and their example, and the example of the heathens, worked as a contagion amongst the more fervent. These years of repose caused the faithful also to forget the contrast between themselves and the Gentiles, and

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\* See a refutation of Dodwell's Dissertation “On the small number of the Martyrs,” in Palma's “Prælectiones Hist. Eccles.” tom. i. cap. 4. et seq. Romæ, 1837; also, Dr. Wiseman's Lectures “On the Connexion between Science and Revealed Religion,” vol. ii. p. 137.

to adopt in their own conduct many of the profane principles of heathenism. It was, therefore, in the counsels of Divine Providence, that the Church should be tried in the searching fire of a new persecution, which now burst forth; those who belonged only externally to the Church, would not perhaps withstand this severe probation, and would fall away, but religion would gain by their defection.

Decius Trajan commenced his reign with a determination to extirpate the name of Christian. In his first year (250) there appeared an edict, commanding the governors and magistrates, through the whole empire, to compel the Christians to adopt and to practise the religion of the state; and, in case of resistance, to employ the severest tortures. The heaviest punishment was threatened to all magistrates who should neglect this imperial decree. Tortures and death menaced especially the bishops, who were abhorred by the emperor: there fell beneath his hate the holy pope Fabian, Babylas, bishop of Antioch, and Alexander of Jerusalem. The tyrant hoped to shake the constancy of the other Christians by the terrors of his prisons; or if these should fail, by his most cruel tortures, in the arts of which the Roman lictors were well versed. "It was not permitted," says St. Cyprian, "that the Christians should be slain, even though they wished to die." Oftentimes did their tormentors studiously endeavour to prevent them from expiring under their sufferings. Swords and fires, wild beasts and seats of heated iron, hooks and pincers,—the whole apparatus of cruelty,—were displayed before the eyes of the Christians, to intimidate them, and were employed against those who dared to withstand. Many fled from their homes, leaving all that they held dear behind them; death was threatened if they should return, and their goods were confiscated. The prisons were crowded with holy confessors, so that other public buildings were employed to receive them. How wanton was the cruelty of the heathens towards the martyrs, we learn from St. Jerome: "The Christian," says this father, "was first stretched



upon the rack, and burned with heated hoops or plates of iron. He was then covered with honey, and was placed with his hands bound behind him in the burning sun, exposed to the stings of gnats and wasps. In this state, he was left to die and putrify."

The number of those who fell from their faith, subdued by the persecution, was great: many surrendered at the first summons, and either sacrificed to the Gods, or offered incense to them: many presented themselves uncalled, and with impious and lying lips declared that they had never been Christians. Others bore for a few days the dreariness of their dungeons, or the first degrees of torture, and then proved faithless to their God. During the persecution of Severus, many wealthy Christians had purchased from the governors bills of security, by which they were freed from all further vexation on account of their religion. Many others had now recourse to the same means, and bribed either the connivance or the avarice of the persecutors: but, on the present occasion, those who received these papers (*libelli*) were compelled to enregister their names as if they had sacrificed to the Gods and denied Christ. This conduct bore upon it the mark of criminal dissimulation, and the bishops of the Church, in reprobating the perfidy of these Christians, who were named *libellatici*, declared to them that while they kept their hands from the sacrifices, they had defiled their consciences by inscribing their names with those who had fallen away. Those who simply enregistered their names, but without payment, as if they obeyed the law, were named *acta facientes*: a distinction was drawn between the *sacrificatos* and *thurificatos*, who were condemned as public apostates, and the *libellaticos* and *acta facientes*, who were considered by the Church as guilty of a tacit denial of their faith.

The sorrow of the Church, occasioned by the infidelity of so many of her children, was consoled by the wonderful constancy of the multitudes of her martyrs and confessors. There wanted not instances in which the sufferers expired upon the rack, as did Mappalicus at

Carthage; and the more invincible was the fortitude displayed by the martyr, the more furious became the rage of the judge. If in the commencement of the persecution the punishment of death was not inflicted, this mercy seems soon to have disappeared, at least in the provinces. In Africa a zealous Christian, named Numidicus, had exhorted and encouraged many of his brethren to die the glorious death of martyrs: he had seen his own wife die upon the rack, and was at length himself doomed to the flames. His daughter, who went to search for his relics, found his half-burned body beneath the pyre, and discovered that he still breathed. By her care he was restored, and was ordained soon after, by St. Cyprian, a priest of his Church.

Happily, however, this persecution, which surpassed all that had preceded it, in extent and fury, was of short duration. The author of it lost his life in 251, in his wars with the Goths. A short respite of tranquillity followed, until, in the following year, the rage of the people was excited against the Christians, who refused to partake in the sacrifices that were offered to the Gods during a violent epidemic. The succeeding emperor, Gallus, gave the example; and in Rome, where the presence of Decius had before inflamed the persecution, he caused the blood of the Christians again to flow. The popes Cornelius and Lucius were successively judged and condemned: the priest Hippolytus, that he might experience the fate of his namesake, the son of Theseus, was torn to pieces by wild horses. In 253, Gallus was murdered; Valerian, his successor, at first evinced sentiments of favour towards the Christians, but his kindness was suddenly, and by the machinations of the magician Macrian, converted into hate. In the year 257, there appeared an edict, which prohibited the assemblies of the faithful, and threatened with exile all bishops and priests who should refuse to sacrifice. By the banishment of the bishops, Valerian thought to ensure the destruction of the different Churches: but to these zealous pastors exile was only a means of conveying the light of the gospel to nations upon which it had yet never shone.

With the clergy, many of the people also were soon sent to labour in the mines; and in 258, the emperor published a decree, ordaining that bishops, priests, and deacons, should be beheaded; that senators and knights should suffer the loss of their possessions, and death, if they should persevere in their disobedience; that females of high rank should be banished; and that Christians in the court of the emperor, should be bound in chains, and condemned to labour at his imperial pleasure. The holy pope Sixtus suffered martyrdom, and was followed after a few days by his deacon, Lawrence. The prefect of Rome demanded of him the surrender of the treasures, which, report had said, were possessed by the Church; and when St. Lawrence presented to him, as his only wealth, the poor, whom he had nourished, he was condemned to the slow and horrid death of being broiled upon a gridiron. In Africa, the proconsul, Galerius Maximus, caused one hundred and fifty Christians to be beheaded together.\* He condemned to death, St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, as a contemner of the Gods and sacred laws of Rome. The holy pastor died, as he had always desired to die, in the presence of his flock. He fell beneath the sword, in an open place near Carthage, on the 14th of September, in the year 258.

Valerian had perished in captivity in Persia. His son Gallienus became sole emperor in 259, and published an edict, which granted to the Christians the free exercise of their religion, and commanded the restoration of the houses and lands belonging to the Church, and particularly the places of burial. As only those corporations and communities, which were admitted by the laws, could hold property, the Christian Church was now for the first time acknowledged by the state. In the east, however, where Macrianus had assumed the power of emperor, the persecution still continued. But there,

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\* In the thirteenth hymn of Prudentius it is stated that the alternative of sacrificing to the idols, or of being buried in unslacked lime, was proposed to this band of holy martyrs. They entered instantly into their burning grave, and were thence named the "Massa Candida."



also, it ceased after a short time, and now commenced for the Christians a long reign of peace, which was not interrupted even by Aurelian, a most zealous adherent to idolatry. He had indeed prepared (according to some writers, he had published) a decree of persecution, when he fell a victim to a conspiracy of his generals.

After many revolutions in the state, Diocletian ascended the imperial throne in 284. So insecure, and so changing, had been the power of the emperors since the reign of M. Aurelius, that of thirty who had borne the purple in a space of one hundred years, only three had died a natural death. Of the others, nearly all had been slain by their own soldiers. To secure his throne, Diocletian surrounded it with all the pomp of oriental splendour. He assumed the diadem, introduced the customs of Asiatic courts into his own palace, and adopted,—not as Domitian, in the folly of pride, but with cool design—the titles of “divinity, and sacred majesty.” He divided the empire, first with Maximian, and later with two Cæsars, Galerius and Constantius. His object in this proceeding was partly to lighten the weight of the government of his vast empire, and partly to prevent the murder of the emperors, as the murderers would fear that their death would be revenged by the survivors. The chief emperor, Diocletian, could not favour a religion which permitted to its members neither entire obedience to his despotic rule, nor an acknowledgment of the divinity which had seated itself on the throne at Nicomedia. He had resolved to restore the Roman empire to its pristine splendour, and for this end the preservation and defence of its ancient religion seemed indispensable. He had already expressed these sentiments in an edict issued against the Manichees in 296: “It is the greatest crime to call in question that which the ancients have believed, which is an essential part of our government, and is now firmly established.”

During eighteen years, however, he\* attempted no-

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\* If the history of the Theban legion be true, Maximian, the partner of Diocletian in the empire, was from the beginning of his reign a cruel enemy and persecutor of the Christians. The history is this: In

thing against the Church: he saw that former persecutions, so far from weakening, had strengthened it: he saw that an endeavour to arrest the daily advancing progress of Christianity would cost torrents of blood, and that it would, therefore, be at present unwise. The Church now numbered amongst her children many of the best and most noble of all ranks, and if it should continue to gain in equal numbers from the ranks of idolatry, the destruction of this latter power was fast approaching. Prisca, the wife of Diocletian, and her daughter Valeria, the wife of Galerius, were Christians. The highest officers of the court, such as Dorotheus and Gorgonius, and magistrates of the first rank, publicly declared themselves professors of the new religion. The old churches had become too small for the numbers of the faithful, and in every city others more spacious and more elegant were erected. The pagan governors and magistrates displayed towards the bishops a marked respect, and an attention approaching almost to veneration. But peace was again, as before the persecution of Decius, accompanied with many evils and abuses: many persons, without vocation, had intruded themselves in the sanctuary, since the entrance therein was now no longer dangerous, but was, on account of the rich alms of the faithful, highly advantageous. Eusebius complains of the indolence and contests of the bishops, and of disunion in the Churches.

The sword of persecution was first drawn by the barbarous, blood-thirsty, and fanatical Galerius. He had already, in 298, manifested his disposition towards the Christians by his cruelties to those who were found

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the army of Maximian there was an entire legion of Christian soldiers, natives of Thebais in the east. Maximian wished to employ them, as he did his other soldiers, to search for, and to punish the Christians. They refused to proceed further with him, and remained in the narrow pass of Agaunum, now S. Maurice, in the Vallais, in Switzerland. By the command of the emperor, they were twice decimated, and at length all massacred. Concerning this, in itself improbable, event, all the contemporary writers, Christian and pagan, are silent. It is first mentioned in the sixth century, by Eucherius, who was bishop of Lyons about 530. The only authority to which he appeals is an uncertain report.

in his army or court : but his dependance upon the chief emperor, Diocletian, obliged him to confine his hatred to particular cases, and few received the crown of martyrdom until the hostility of Diocletian himself to the Church became known. The next impulse was given by the pagan priests. In the summer of 302, Diocletian slew a multitude of victims in sacrifice, that from the examination of their entrails he might learn his future destinies. The Christians, who by their offices at court were compelled to attend, signed themselves with the sign of the cross, and this circumstance was seized by the priests, to persuade the emperor that the sacrifices would be of no avail, whilst offered in the presence of profane men, who could impede the influence of them by their signs. In his anger, he commanded that all the Christians in his court should sacrifice or be scourged. He sent orders, also, to all the chiefs of his army, to oblige the soldiers to join in the sacrifices, or to be ignominiously expelled.

Galerius now arrived at Nicomedia, and employed every effort to inspire into Diocletian his own spirit of cruel hatred, and to lead him into the bloody path of persecution. Diocletian withstood him for a long time, and pointed out the dangers of such a course. He at length convened an assembly of the chief officers and commanders of his army ; these, influenced partly by hatred of the Christian name, and partly by a desire to please Galerius, determined that the enemies of the Gods should be punished. Not yet contented, the emperor consulted the oracle of Apollo. The oracle answered : "The just men upon earth prevented the utterance of the truth, and therefore only false answers could proceed from the tripod." To the interrogation of the emperor, who these just men might be ? the sacrificing priest replied, that the Christians were thereby designated. Then at length he surrendered, and the festival of the Terminalia, the 23rd February, 303, was the day chosen for the declaration of the emperor's will ; on this day—a day of auspicious omen in the imagination



of the Romans—the overthrow of the religion of Jesus Christ should commence.

At the dawn of morning the beautiful churches of Nicomedia were violently broken open, plundered and destroyed by the soldiers. On the following day an edict proclaimed, "That all Christians, without exception, were deprived of their honours and dignities; that all persons were free to bring accusations against the Christians, but these were not at liberty to utter a complaint for any wrongs received; that the churches should be destroyed, their possessions confiscated, and the sacred books burned." The edict was torn down by a Christian, who rending it in pieces, exclaimed: "Behold the proclamation of victories gained over the Goths and Sarmatians!" He was seized, stretched upon the rack, placed over a slow fire, and at last burned to death. A second edict followed, ordering that all bishops and priests should be imprisoned; this was followed by a third, which offered liberation to those who would sacrifice to the Gods, and torture to those who should refuse. In 304, the second year of the persecution, the punishment of death was decreed, and from one extremity of the empire to the other, with the exception of Gaul, there raged against the Christians a barbaric cruelty, which as far exceeds all human nature, as did the heroic fortitude with which it was endured.

Soon after the destruction of the churches at Nicomedia, the palace of Diocletian was consumed by fire, caused by the wickedness of Galerius, who wished to cast odium upon the Christians: it was certainly turned by him to that purpose, to madden the old emperor against them. Diocletian now began to persecute the Christians in his court. His wife, Prisca, and his daughter, Valeria, were either Christians, or among the catechumens, and were induced by the fear of death to sacrifice. His chamberlains, Dorotheus and Gorgonius, were strangled, and another, named Peter, was barbarously tortured to death. He was suspended by cords,

and scourged until the flesh fell from his bones; vinegar and salt were rubbed upon his mangled body, and he was condemned to die over a slowly burning fire. Antimus, bishop of Nicomedia, was beheaded.

Diocletian wrote to Maximian and Constantius Chlorus, that the same system of barbarity might reign throughout the whole empire. The former required no impulse to excite him to imitate his colleague in Italy and Africa. It was otherwise in Gaul. Constantius, not further to enrage the emperor, destroyed the churches, but injured not the persons of the Christians. The execution of the imperial edicts was not uniform, and depended greatly upon the will of the magistrates. The command to liberate from the overflowing prisons, those who should consent to sacrifice, and to employ the severest compulsion against those who would not consent, threw open a wide field to caprice and cruelty. It is impossible to describe the eagerness of the persecutors in the pursuit of their victims, or their perseverance in the application of their demoniac cruelties. Too feeble are the words of Lactantius: "Mourning is spread upon the whole earth, and, if you except Gaul, from the rising to the setting sun, these three wild beasts are heard to rage." Some of the martyrs were so happy as to meet with instant death by decapitation; others were left to pine in dungeons, subject oftentimes to the torture; others were consumed in crowds by fire. Eusebius, who had witnessed many of these awful cruelties, assures us that the executioners were often compelled by fatigue to desist from their horrid labours, and that their instruments of torture became blunted. Even children were thrown into the flames. The wonderful fortitude of Mucius Scævola was often repeated during this persecution. Incense was placed in the right hands of the Christians, which were bound over burning coals, but the sufferers endured rather that their hands should be burnt, than that they should seem, even in their convulsions of agony, to cast the incense into the flames. That many, and amongst them

some bishops, should have been overcome by fear of death, cannot surprise us. Priests, or other ecclesiastics, who delivered the sacred Scriptures to be publicly burnt, were called *traditores*. Diocletian was especially intent upon the destruction of the holy volumes; but his officers, either through humanity or indifference, sometimes neglected his orders, or were satisfied by the surrender of any manuscript that was offered to them. Frequently the writings of heretics were given to them: this conduct was encouraged by the magistrates in their questions, "where are your worthless books? or perhaps you have none?" Many Christians profited by this stratagem, and as they thought, justly, to save the Scriptures; some returned equivocal answers, but others, more severe, condemned them, and hence arose, particularly in northern Africa, serious controversies upon their offence, the *crimen traditionis*.

So active was the zeal of the persecutors, that they sought to eternalize, by inscriptions, the destruction of the Christian superstition, and the restoration of the ancient religion.\* It was said at length, that this unremitted slaughter was repugnant to the mildness and clemency of the emperors, and many Christians were therefore liberated, after they had been deprived of an eye, or branded by fire. Every measure that could cast odium upon the Christians was adopted to destroy their religion. While the fires of persecution were yet blazing, two philosophers published writings against the sufferers. A forged narration, attributed to Pontius Pilate, and containing the most revolting blasphemies against our divine Lord, was, by the command of Maximian, widely circulated amongst the people. It was publicly exhibited in the cities, that all might read it; and teachers were directed to place it in the hands of their pupils, and oblige them to commit it to memory. At Damascus, a captain of the army apprehended some worthless females, and compelled them to declare, in writing, that they had formerly been Christians, but

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\* "Nomine Christianorum deletio;" "Superstitione Christiana ubique delata et cultu Deorum propagato."



had forsaken the Church on account of the wickedness of its members. This report was sent to the emperor, who commanded it to be made known through all the cities.

This persecution had been more cruel and more bloody, of greater extent, and of longer duration, than any that had preceded it: it was the last struggle of idolatry against its formidable rival,—a struggle not conducted with cool and calculated severity, but with a demoniacal spirit of fury, that was exhaustless in the invention of torments, and in the destruction of the bodies, as it could not touch the souls of its victims. Hence not even the innocence of children was spared. At Antioch, a tender youth, who had declared his belief in the God of the Christians, was scourged, before the eyes of his encouraging mother, to such a degree, that he expired beneath the lash. In Phrygia, a city inhabited entirely by Christians, was surrounded by soldiers, and consumed, with its inhabitants, by fire. In Cilicia, three Christians, Tharacus, Probus, and Andronicus, were tortured first at Tarsus in the most cruel manner; they were then conveyed to Mopsueste, where again all the horrors of barbarity were inflicted upon them; and a third time at Anazarbus. Thus tormented, they were brought into the amphitheatre, and there exposed to the wild beasts; but when these forgot their native fury, and licked the wounds of their destined victims, the saints were slain by gladiators. At Alexandria, the young virgin Theodora was thrown into a house of infamy, from which she was liberated by a Christian, named Didymus, who was therefore beheaded. Even now, as in former persecutions, the power of God was manifested in many of his martyrs. Eusebius was witness of a scene at Tyre, in which five Egyptian Christians, who had been torn by scourges, were thrown to be devoured by wild beasts. The wild beasts touched not the prey that had been cast to them: whips and hot iron were employed to infuriate them: they ran furiously towards the martyrs, but when they approached, they turned, and, instead of the Christians,

devoured their keepers. Only the sword remained to accomplish the work of death.

On the first of May, in the year 305, Diocletian at Nicomedia, and by his command, Maximian at Milan, resigned the imperial dignity. Galerius and Constantius assumed the title of emperors, and divided the empire: the former honoured with the name of Cæsar his nephew Daja, who now called himself Maximin, and the worthless Severus. In the west, Constantius arrested the progress of persecution, and commanded the confiscated churches to be restored to the Christians. He died at York in 306, but his son and successor soon showed himself even more favourable to the Christians. Maximin, on the contrary, the ruler of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, who was blindly addicted to magic, sorcery, and every species of heathenish superstition, left no effort untried to restore the ascendancy of idolatry. He endeavoured to rival the cruelty of his uncle, and was seconded in his attempts in Palestine by the governors Urban and Firmilian, whom he afterwards rewarded with death. We may judge of the actions of Urban, from the following fact. On Easter Sunday in the year 307, several Christians in chains were seated before his palace awaiting their condemnation. Theodosia, a maiden of seventeen years of age, approached them, and recommended herself to their prayers. She was seized, torn with iron hooks and thrown into the sea. Under Firmilian, his successor, two sisters were inhumanly tortured and afterwards cast upon a burning pile. The cruelties of Maximin may not be described. Ninety-seven Christians were brought from the porphyry mines of Thebais to Palestine, where they were blinded in one eye and lamed in one leg by order of Firmilian: one hundred and thirty were in like manner conveyed from the mines in Egypt, which were filled with holy confessors, and, having been lamed, they were sent to different places in Cilicia and Palestine.

When, towards the end of 308, the torrents of blood flowed less rapidly, Maximin sought by new edicts, directed to all his governors, to revive the persecution.

He commanded that the fallen temples should be restored, that all, without exception, men and women, old and young, should offer sacrifice and partake of the victims. So far did his madness go, that he ordained, that all meats exposed in the market-place should be first sprinkled with the water or wine used in the sacrifices, so that all Christians might be compelled to participate in them. At this period, the learned Pamphilus, priest and doctor in the Christian school of Cæsarea, was martyred, with eleven companions. In the following year, Palestine enjoyed a short repose: but new orders came from Maximin; whereupon, in 310, two Egyptian bishops, Neleus and Peleus, were condemned to the flames, and Silvanus, with thirty-eight fellow sufferers, were beheaded.\*

Galerius was at this time tormented by a loathsome and incurable disease, and there arose within him a suspicion that the God, whose worshippers he had in vain endeavoured to destroy, might perhaps be more than a chimera, and that the pains which he now endured, might be a punishment sent to him by this God, in revenge of the torments that he had inflicted upon so many Christians. In 311, there appeared a law, which granted to the persecuted the free exercise of their religion, under the pretence that the emperor yielded to the obstinacy of the Christians; that if they would not worship the Gods of their fathers, they might adore at least their own. In return for this indulgence, they were commanded to pray *to their God*, for the welfare of the emperor and of the state. Maximin dared not to oppose the decree of his uncle: the con-

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\* Among the bishops who suffered during this persecution, from 303 to 311, there were, in addition to the above, Phileas of Thmuis, Tyrrannius of Tyre, and his successor Methodius, formerly bishop of Olympus, Philip of Heraclea, Silvanus of Emera, Basilicus of Romana, and Felix of Tibiura in Africa.—In the west also, the tender age of youthful virgins was not spared, as we learn from the martyrdoms of St. Eulalia, at Emerita in Spain, who was only twelve years old, and of St. Agnes, of the same age, at Rome. The memory of the latter holy martyr has been preserved by the western Church in the highest veneration since the fourth century.



fessors returned from the mines into his province, where they began to rebuild their churches. The astonished idolaters gazed in wonder, when they saw that their united efforts for eight long years had been made in vain, and that Christianity rose again triumphant and as new-born from the furious tempest of blood that had rolled over it.

The death of Galerius left Maximin sole master of Roman Asia. Soon were hostilities against Christianity renewed, and as it was well known that any demonstration of hatred against the Christians would be agreeable to him, deputations were sent from the cities, praying that the Christians might not be permitted to dwell within their walls. Death, too, again began its work. Peter, bishop of Alexandria, was beheaded in 311; five Egyptian bishops, with a multitude of the faithful, in a short time followed him; and early in 312, one of the most learned of Christian theologians, Lucian, priest of Antioch, suffered martyrdom. Maximin made war against his ally, Tiridates, prince of Armenia, only because the prince had embraced Christianity; but his legions were defeated.

In the meantime, Constantine had formed an alliance with Licinus, who had been named Augustus by Galerius. Each in his own dominions published decrees which brought peace to the Christians. The tyrant Maxentius, son of Maximian, lost his crown and his life, in the battle at the Pons Milvius, near Rome, in 312: Maximin, who was involved in this war, was defeated by Licinus, in 313, and destroyed himself by poison. The Christians were now freed from their ruthless persecutors. Licinus extended to all the provinces of the east, an edict, published in 313, by Constantine at Milan. It was, "that the Christians should enjoy the same liberty of religion as the other subjects of the empire; that any person was free to pass to their religion; that their churches and confiscated possessions should be restored; and that the purchasers should be indemnified from the public treasury."

## SECTION XI.

## ATTACKS UPON CHRISTIANITY BY PAGAN WRITERS.\*

WHILE the emperors and their vicegerents endeavoured to destroy the Christian religion by the sword and the rack, by wild beasts and instruments of barbaric torture, the pagan writers and philosophers exerted themselves, in their spheres, with the aid of ridicule, misrepresentation, and calumny, to disgrace it in the estimation of the learned.

The scoffer Lucian, a contemporary of the Antonines, was, by his Epicurean principles, an enemy to every form of religion; he therefore considered Christianity as no more than one of many follies of men, upon which he had poured out his bitter ridicule. He appears, however, to have devoted only a slight attention to it. In his description of Peregrinus Proteus, he joins this imposter with the Christians, and thence takes occasion to represent what he knows of them in the most odious light. It is easy, indeed, to discover the fiction which runs through this picture, but the remarks of the author may be taken as his real sentiments respecting Christianity and its professors. The latter appeared to him good but foolish men, who were easily deceived: in their fortitude and contempt of death, he could see no more than the effects of a blind superstition,—in their mutual love and zeal to assist each other, no more than an artful spirit of sectarianism. “These poor men,” he says, “believe that their bodies and souls will be hereafter immortal; they therefore despise death, and frequently present themselves to torture.” To Lucian this seemed no better than the childish foolishness of deluded men: an unprejudiced mind would have beheld

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\* Lucian, *De Morte Peregrini*; Origen, *contra Celsum*; Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii Tyanæ*; Eusebius, *Cæsariensis, contra Hieroclem*; *Fragmenta Porphyrii*, collected in Holstenii *de Vita et Scriptis Porphyrii*, in Fabricii *Biblioth. Græc.*

in this brotherly affection and disinterested generosity, subjects of admiration and esteem for a religion which could produce such lovely fruits.

The first who directly attacked Christianity in writing was the philosopher Celsus, who lived in the first half of the second century, a friend of Lucian, to whom he has dedicated one of his works. Whether he were an Epicurean, as Origen supposes, or a Platonic, is still doubtful: he was probably one of those eclectics who chose systems for themselves, as it suited their convenience. He has collected together, without order, but in language of passionate, bitter hatred, all that the heathens had, before him, objected to the Christians; and as his opponent Origen has preserved his words, the contents of his book have thus come down to us, but we will not repeat them.

If Celsus thus endeavoured to degrade the person of our Holy Redeemer, and, to effect his purpose, spared not the most impious, the most horrid accusations, the better and the more learned among the heathens, the philosophers of the Platonic school, shared not with him these revolting designs. On the contrary, they could not withhold their admiration of the character of Jesus, nor refuse their homage to its high beauty and sublimity. This reluctant acknowledgment is manifested by their effort to oppose to it similar characters from the pagan world. It could not remain concealed from the thoughtful heathen, how great a lustre the personality of its founder shed upon the Christian religion, and that the Christian possessed in his Saviour all that a religious man could need, but which, as his own experience taught him, was not found in paganism,—or seen only in weak, scattered, and broken rays. The exaltation of the human, by its union with the Divine, nature in one person; doctrines based upon Divine authority; the ideal of a being free from sin, and raised above the weaknesses of men; a moral and a religious reformer, the great benefactor of the human race, who as the God-Man had displayed his power over all nature;—all this was found in Jesus, and in comparison with this



living, historical picture of the Redeemer, all the apparitions of the Gods, contained in Greek mythology, were unmeaning and of no value. When, therefore, the philosophers looked around them for persons whom they might place at the side of Christ, and whose worth and works might stand in an analogous relation to paganism, they selected two historical characters, Pythagoras and Apollonius of Tyana, the life of the former of whom had already been obscured by fables. The history of Apollonius was written for the purpose mentioned above, by Flavius Philostratus, who lived at Rome in the beginning of the third century. His work was dedicated to Julia, the empress of Severus. The hero of Philostratus was born at Tyana in Cappadocia, about the time of the birth of our Redeemer. In the reigns of Vespasian and Domitian, he was celebrated for his knowledge of philosophy and magic: Lucian, and those who thought with him, gave him the reputation of a cheat and impostor, whilst his more early biographer, Meiragenes, considered him a mighty sorcerer, whose power was acknowledged by learned philosophers. Dio Cassius relates that at Ephesus, in the presence of the assembled people, he had a vision, in which he beheld the murder of Domitian at the moment in which it was perpetrated in Rome. By the lovers of magic he was highly extolled. Caracalla built a sanctuary in his honour; and in many places temples were erected to him. This determined Philostratus to select him as the subject of his fiction, for by what other name can we designate a narration compiled to serve a particular end, and in which there is contained no historical truth? Apollonius is here represented, not as a magician, but as the ideal of a Pythagorean; who is, however, more than mortal man, a manifestation of the Deity, sent by Heaven on an embassy to the world. His object is to effect a religious reformation of paganism, to establish, and to confirm by word and example, the true and pure worship of the Gods, and, in opposition to the tyranny of the Roman emperors, to recover and to restore political liberty. After he had drawn from the

fountains of religious wisdom in India, he commenced long journeys, everywhere occupied in awakening and extending a knowledge of the Gods, love and piety towards them, and the true method of offering sacrifices. He rejected all bloody oblations. He visited the temples of the Gods, resided in the most beautiful of them, censured the absurd mythology of Greece, and the adoration of animals practised by the Egyptians: he taught the emperors Vespasian and Titus the just use of the supreme power, and opposed himself to the despotism of Domitian. He abstained from animal food and wine, was dressed only in linen garments, went bare-footed, and never married: he lived a life of solitude; and in the contempt of death, with which he was threatened by Domitian, shewed himself, as in all other things, above human nature. Finally, he announced his high descent and divine dignity by miracles, by his power of penetrating into the deepest secrets, and of revealing the coming events of futurity. Having thus made known his celestial origin, he permitted himself to be addressed by the title of God.

Throughout the whole work, Philostratus does not mention either Jesus or Christianity, which had induced some writers to conclude that his history has no reference to this religion or its founder. But it is easy to perceive that this silence is affected: and that Jesus is the model from which he has pourtrayed his hero, is evident from the similarity of the miracles attributed to Apollonius with those wrought by our Redeemer.

More distinctly still was Pythagoras represented, by the Neoplatonics, Porphyrius, and Iamblicus, as a God in human form, who came to heal and to bless mankind, who came concealed in the nature of man, that the splendours of his divinity might not oppress and overpower weak mortals. The imitation of the history of Christ is not so evident here as in the life of Apollonius, for this reason, that the Neoplatonics could throw around their hero more of history and fable than Philostratus could employ. But the object proposed—to oppose to the founder of Christianity, a divine person,

a reformer of heathenism, and a legislator,—is the same, and cannot escape our observance. The Pythia of Delphi, so it is said, had foretold to the father of Pythagoras, the birth of a wonderful son. In his youth, the son, by his life, and by his miracles, manifested this divine nature: in him were developed in their perfection all the virtues which men should desire: he was the founder of a metropolis in Magna Græcia: he directed all his efforts to the advancement of religion, and to the worship of the Gods, which he taught to be the first and greatest of duties. That men might arrive at a purity of soul and self-dominion, and might be made worthy of the friendship of the Gods, he instituted a severe ascetic mode of life. Animals of the lower order, beasts, and even fishes, recognized the Deity in him, and obeyed his voice. The conclusion which Porphyrius drew from these facts, referring them polemically to Christ, was, “that a good equal to that which the Gods conferred upon mankind through Pythagoras, had never before existed, nor should ever again exist.”

The most distinguished adversary of Christianity was Porphyrius, a native of Batanea in Syria, where he was born in 233, a scholar of Plotinus, and, without doubt, the most learned philosopher of his age. His fifteen books against Christianity, written in Sicily, were extolled by the heathens as a divine work; the most celebrated bishops of the time, Methodius, Apollinaris, and Eusebius, published refutations of this work; but the fifteen books, and the answers of the bishops, have together perished. We may, however, collect part of the substance of the writings of Porphyrius from extracts which have been preserved in the works of the Fathers. His first object is to discover contradictions in the books of the New Testament, from which he concludes that the whole is the work of erring men: he cites the reproof received by St. Peter from St. Paul, (Gal. ii.) and accuses the latter of arrogance and ambition in daring to reprehend the prince of the apostles. He then turns to the Old Testament, and ridicules the allegorical interpretation of many Christians, and speaks in severe



terms of Origen, with whom he was personally acquainted, who, although a Greek, and educated amongst Greeks, had abandoned the learning of his country for barbarous doctrines (*βαρβαρον τολμημα*). He enters into a minute examination of the prophecy of Daniel, and pronounces it to be a forgery, written after the events which it pretends to foretell. He attacks the doctrines of Christianity; declares that there can be no proportion between sin and eternal punishment, although Christ had said, "With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." Christ abolished the sacrifices of the law which had been instituted by God. He repeats the objection before urged by Celsus, and afterwards by many others: "If Christ be the only way to salvation, why did he appear so late amongst men?" Lastly, from particular facts recorded in the gospels and Acts of the Apostles, he draws most odious consequences: for example, from the sudden deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, he takes occasion to accuse St. Peter of cruel severity. He rejects the wonders, wrought at the tombs of the martyrs, as delusive works of the demon.

In another work of Porphyrius, the endeavour to assimilate paganism with Christianity, and to supply the defects of the one from the abundance of the other, is again made manifest. Porphyrius saw the great advantage of the Christians in the possession of a book which they declared to be divine, upon the authority of which they reposed, which was so united with their teaching, that each was illustrated and confirmed by the other. Something analogous, therefore, must be found for paganism: a collection of sentences, uttered by oracles, would form the desired book, a code of immediate revelations, in which the doubtful might find whereon to rest their belief in the existence and power of the Gods. In this collection there were oracles regarding Jesus Christ, who was represented as a man glorious for his virtue, and who, after enduring sufferings in the body, was borne away to Heaven. By an extraordinary destiny, said the oracle, Jesus had been the occasion of

error to many souls which had not been enlightened by the Gods. He was not, however, to be blamed, concluded Porphyrius: but they were to be condemned who falsified his doctrines, and employed them as a garment to conceal their own contempt of the Gods. In contradiction to this stood another oracle in which Jesus is condemned. A man had enquired, (consulted the oracle), to learn how his wife could be cured of her Christian superstition? The God replied: "Sooner shalt thou write on water, or fly through the air, than convert thy defiled irreligious wife: let her continue in her errors, and celebrate in deluding songs of sorrow her God, who was condemned by just judges to a shameful death."

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## SECTION XII.

### THE APOLOGISTS.\*

AT the same period in which these works of pagan authors against the gospel and its founder appeared, Christian writers published apologies for their faith, addressed to the emperors and governors, to dissuade them from their cruelties; or to the learned men of the age, to present to them a true portraiture of the almost unknown, but universally detested, Christian religion; to expose the hideous nature of paganism, and to justify the Christians in their defection from the religion of the state. The first of these apologies, presented by Quadratus and Aristides, in the year 131, to the emperor Adrian, are lost, as are also those of Miltiades, of Apollinaris of Hierapolis, of Irenæus and Melito of Sardes.

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\* The Greek Apologists, Justin, Athenagoras, Theophilus, Tatian, Hermias, collected by Prudent. Maranus, Paris, 1742, folio. Minucii Felicis, Octavius, edid. Gronovius, Lugd. Batav. 1709. Tertulliani, Apologeticus, ad Nationes, Lib. ii. ad Scapulam, ed. Rigaltius, Paris, 1634. Origines adv. Celsum, Paris, 1733, edid. Carol. De la Rue. Cyprianus ad Demetrianum: de Vanitate Idolorum. Arnobus adv. Gentes, edid. J. C. Orëllius, Lips. 1816.

The most ancient that has been preserved to us, is that of St. Justin the Martyr, who was born at Flavia Neapolis (Sichem), in Samaria, and was by birth a pagan. After he had long sought in vain for truth in the various systems of Greek philosophy, his attention was first directed to the Christian religion by the constancy of the martyrs; the instructions of a Christian, and the study of the Scriptures, completed his conversion to the faith. In two apologies, he pleaded the cause of his oppressed fellow-believers. The first and longer of the two, was addressed, in the year 138, to the emperor Antoninus Pius and his adopted son; the second to Marcus Aurelius. In a short "Address to the Heathens," he demonstrates the vanity of pagan theology, and the motives which induced him to forsake it; in his "Exhortation" (*Παραίνετικός προς Ελλήνας*), he conjures them to acknowledge the insufficiency of their religion as well as of their philosophy, and to humble themselves before the truth of Christianity. In another work, which has not been preserved entire, on the Unity of God, he cites passages from the Greek poets and from Plato, which prove that they confessed one supreme God, the Creator and Preserver of all things, and some of them, Menander, Euripides, and Homer, had ridiculed the deities of Greece.\*

A scholar of Justin, Tatian the Syrian, in a discourse addressed to the heathens, in 170, opposes Christianity to idolatry, as the only true philosophy, and the writings of the Old Testament as the source of the most ancient and purest truths; he censures the levity of the Greeks, who rejected the Christian religion as being, so they imagined, of barbarous origin; he severely criticizes the morals of the idolaters, their pursuits,

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\* In the Dialogue with the Jew Tryphon (which some writers have without reason denied to St. Justin), he adduces, as a proof of Christianity, the accomplishment of prophecies contained in the Old Testament. The beautiful letter to Diognetus must be attributed to another and more ancient writer, probably to a disciple of the Apostles. The author seems to intimate this: he speaks of the sacrifices of Jerusalem as still existing.



their laws, their religion, and philosophy. Tatian defended Christianity, and attacked paganism in general terms. Athenagoras, a Christian philosopher of Athens, confined himself in his Address (Προσβηται) to Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (or Commodus?) to the refutation of the accusations against the Christians, and to the consequent inference, that they are worthy of the imperial protection. In another short but masterly work, he proves that the resurrection of the body, a doctrine so indignantly rejected by the pagans, is not wholly unworthy of the Deity, but that it is intimately connected with the designs of God, and with the nature of man, to the integrity of which the body essentially belongs. About the same time lived Hermias, another Christian philosopher, who in his writings ridiculed the philosophers of Greece, by collecting and contrasting their pernicious and frequently contradictory doctrines. But far more precious is the work, in three books, of Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, addressed to the heathen Autolycus. The "Octavius" of Minucius Felix the African, was the first apologetical work (written probably in the reign of M. Aurelius) that appeared in the western Church. In this work, a dialogue, the repeated accusations and calumnies of the heathen Cecilius against Christianity, are refuted by the Christian Octavius. But the most eloquent champion of the Christians in the west, was Tertullian, who flourished under and after Severus. His apologies consist, first, of his work in two books, addressed in general to the pagans, *Ad Nationes*; secondly, of his master-work, written in 198 or 200, and presented to the governor of Africa; and lastly, of his address, written in 121 to the proconsul Scapula.

Another path was followed by Clement of Alexandria, who was deeply learned in all the wisdom and speculations of Greece, and whose writings form a series of apologies. In his *Protrepticus*, he conjures the pagans to renounce their pernicious errors: his *Pedagogus* contains an abstract of the doctrines of Christianity, and a glowing picture of the lives of the faithful: the

*Stromata* unite the elements of a Christian gnosis with the purest parts of the different systems of philosophy. His great disciple and successor, Origen, wrote, in the reign of the emperor Philip, the most powerful and comprehensive apology that appeared in the ancient Church. At the same period, St. Cyprian published his work, drawn principally from Tertullian, on the vanity of the idols; and in 253, addressed a letter to Demetrianus, to move that cruel judge to lenity towards the Christians. During the following fifty years there appeared no work of an apologetic character: at the beginning of the great persecution, the African Arnobius wrote his seven books against idolatry, as a pledge of the sincerity of his conversion.

In defending their own religion, and in assailing the doctrines of paganism, the Fathers followed the common belief of Christians, when they pronounced the heathen worship to be the service of demons. If sometimes they adopted the theory that the Gods were no more than deified men, they all declare unanimously with Origen, that the adoration which the heathens offered to their Gods in the temples and before the altars, was addressed to no other than wicked, fallen spirits. The apostle St. Paul had said (1 Cor. x. 20), that "the things which heathens sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils," and as the philosopher Celsus and the Neoplatonics had designated the demigods, who, according to their doctrines, were the peculiar deities of men, by the name *demons*, the Christians, in part adopting this idea, considered that these demons were those spirits that fell from God,—that allured men away from the knowledge of the true God to heathen superstitions, and to all their accompanying vices. If the pagans appealed to their oracles, to the extraordinary apparitions that were witnessed in the temples, to the wonders that were wrought at the statues of the Gods, the Christians did not reply,—for they could not,—that these were only illusions practised by the priests; they allowed the facts, but contended that they were the works of evil spirits, which sought thereby to retain and confirm men in

error. The widely extended theurgy,—the consecration of temples and of idols, by which the Gods were invoked to unite themselves to the statues, as the soul is united to the body,—must have powerfully tended to confirm the Christians in their ideas of the nature of these Gods.

But whilst the apologists considered the influence of demons as one of the primary causes of idolatry, they forgot not that it owed its birth to the falling away of man from God to sin. Hence did Theophilus say,—“God is seen only by those who can contemplate him; by those the eyes of whose souls are open. The eyes of the soul are darkened by sin: man should therefore preserve his soul clear as a mirror. But, as when rust is upon a mirror, man cannot therein behold his face, so neither can God be seen by him in whose soul sin reigns.” For their faith in Christ, these writers appealed to the prophecies which had been fulfilled in him; they urged less frequently his miracles, for the pagans admitted the facts, but attributed them to the power of magic. They proved, however, that no one thing was more distant from another than magic from the miracles of our Redeemer: and the first of the apologists, Quadratus, thus speaks, in a passage of his work, preserved by Eusebius: “Those who were healed by him, or raised from the dead, lived not only during the lifetime on earth of the Saviour, but for a long period after his departure, so that many of them had come down even to his (Quadratus’s) days.”

With peculiar fondness, the fathers dwelt upon the revolution of morals that had been effected by Christianity. They drew, from daily experience, vivid pictures of the entire change that was wrought in the lives of those who had passed over from idolatry to the Christian faith.

To the objection, that the Christian religion produced only divisions and discord,—that it destroyed the peace and harmony of the empire, and was dangerous to the state, St. Justin answered, “We preserve and maintain peace in the world more than other men, for we teach



that nothing, whether vice or virtue, is hidden from our all-seeing God." Tertullian said, "That the miseries of preceding times had been diminished by the propagation of Christianity; for, by the multitudes of those who embraced the faith, the numbers of sinners were lessened, and those who supplicated for mercy increased."

If the philosophers and learned men among the heathens despised the Christians as being no more than a crowd of ignorant, deluded men, the apologists replied, that the most unlettered Christian showed, by his actions, more true knowledge of divine things, than the most enlightened philosopher of polytheism. "Every Christian artisan," says Tertullian, "has found God, and makes him known to others, although Plato has declared, that it is difficult to discover the Creator of the universe, and when found, to manifest him to other men." "With us," adds Athenagoras, "you may find unlearned men, mechanics, and women, who, if they cannot speak to you in eloquent discourse upon the blessings of their faith, show forth in their lives its abundant fruits; for when struck they strike not again, when plundered they complain not, who give to all who ask from them, and love their brother-men as themselves."

It may be observed that the apologists frequently transfer to their writings citations from works in which they found passages favourable to their own subjects, but which are evidently not genuine. Thus, they often employ a work published under the name of Hystaspes, an ancient wise man of Persia. But they adopt more frequently the pretended Sybilline oracles, of which there were then many, although they had not been collected into one body. They had been written, some by heathens, others by Jews, at different times, and contained denunciations of a speedy destruction of Rome and of idolatry. Many of them, it appears, were composed by Alexandrian Jews, about the year 160 before Christ: in these there breathes a fervent desire for the coming of the promised Messiah. At a later period, in

the time of Adrian and the Antonines, a Christian, perhaps several, edited feigned prophecies regarding the life and actions of Jesus. The authors of these Sybilline fragments had probably no design to deceive: they selected this manner, which had been long in use, of clothing their ideas, as it seemed to them the best adapted to convey Christian truths to the pagans. But in the time of St. Justin, there were many Christians who believed these fragments to be the genuine production of an ancient heathen Sybil, and appealed to them, as did St. Justin himself, against the pagans.

. This not only gave to the pagans occasion for the reproach, that the Christians falsified the Sybilline prophecies by their additions, but was the cause also of the law, mentioned by St. Justin, which prohibited, under pain of death, the reading of the writings of Hystaspes, of the Sybils, and of the books of the prophets. But at the same time there were many amongst the Christians, who reprehended their brethren for their employment of false prophecies, and hence would seem to have arisen the remark of Celsus respecting the existence of a party named Sybillists.\*

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\* At a subsequent period, the Fathers of the Church pronounced these and all other prophecies attributed to the heathens, to be fictions of Christian writers. Thus, St. Augustin, *De Civ. Dei*, xviii. 47: "*Quæcunque aliorum prophetiæ de Dei per Jesum Christum gratia proferuntur, possunt putari a Christianis esse confictæ. Ideo nihil est firmitus ad conveniendos quosvis alienos, si de hac re contenderint, nostrosque faciendos, si recte sapuerint, quam ut divina prædicta de Christo ea proferantur, quæ in Judæorum scripta sunt codicibus.*"

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## CHAPTER THE SECOND.

## SECTION I.

THE SECTS AND HERESIES.—THE JUDAIZING SECTS :  
THE EBIONITES AND NAZARITES.\*

THE existence of the Church has ever been and is still a continued warfare with external and internal foes,—with infidels and false believers,—with all that impedes its developement either in society or in individuals. But in its first ages it was menaced and assailed not so dangerously by the arms of heathenism, as by those who refused to receive the doctrines of Christianity as they were first announced and established by the apostles, and who sought to remodel them according to their own vain imaginings, to unite them and to disfigure them by the union with new and strange opinions. When Christianity entered into the world, it found many who with joy and without delay subjected themselves to its authority, and renounced at once the errors in which they had been nurtured : these were the sincerely faithful and true members of the Catholic Church. There

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\* Epiphanius, *Hæres.* 19, 20, 30; Eusebius, *Hist. Ecc.* iii. 27; Theodoret Fab. *Hæret.* ii. 1, 2; Hieronymus, *Comm. in Jesaiam et Matth.*; Tertull. et Origen, *passim*; The Clementines, in *Cotelerii, Patrum Apostolic.* vol. i. Amstelod. 1724; Traversa, *Storia Critica delle Vite degli Eresiarchi del secolo I. II. e III.* Venez. 1752; Walch, *Entwurf einer vollständigen Historie der Kessereien*, Leipzig, 1762; Geiseler, *Abh. v. d. Nazaräen und Ebioniten*; Credner, *über Essäer und Ebioniten*; Baur, *de Ebionitarum origine et doctrina ab Essenis repetenda*, Tübingen, 1834.



were others, on the contrary, who yielded indeed to the truth of many of its doctrines, but who would not therefore forsake those false ideas of religion which had become dear to them, and almost a part of their being : they endeavoured to associate Christian with Jewish or pagan dogmas : they rejected all of Christianity that would not adapt itself to their own systems, and falsified the rest by an amalgamation of essentially contrary elements. Hence arose the Judaizing and Gentilizing sects and the heresies of the first period of the Church. The Jewish and some of the Gnostic sects have this peculiarity, in which they differ from later heresies, that they went not from the Church by apostatizing from her doctrines, but from their commencement formed themselves into defective imitations of the Church.

In the time of our Saviour and of his apostles, there existed among the Jews many parties and sects violently opposed to each other ; of these we have a knowledge only of the most conspicuous ; for of the theosophystic sects, which in their nature were secret, we have correct information only of the Essenians. Upon this sect, Christianity must have exercised an early and powerful influence ; for we find in its mysteries many contradictions ; and from it sprung the Judaizing Christians, particularly the Ebionites and Nazarites. The observance of the ceremonial law was common to them all.

It is probable that the more ancient Ebionites, who in the later times of the apostles, formed themselves into distinct sects, were originally free from theosophystic or Gnostic errors, and bore an entirely Jewish character, admitting however in Jesus the dignity of Messias. Until the martyrdom of James, the brother of the Lord, says the ancient Hegesippus, the Church continued in its virginal purity, that is, free from error : then Thebutis, incited by disappointed ambition,—because Simeon, and not he, had been created bishop of Jerusalem,—began to mingle the doctrines of the Jewish sects with the doctrines of the Church. It was Judaism therefore which Thebutis, who is nowhere else men-

tioned, introduced among his followers, not a return to the ancient religion, for he preserved the belief that the Messiah had come in the person of Jesus : his faith was, however, more than an observance of the ceremonial law, for this was then practised by all the Jewish converts. Now followed the emigration of the Christians from Jerusalem to the opposite side of the Jordan, to Pella and to the province of Perea. In this region and on the shores of the Dead Sea, dwelt the Esseans, (called by Epiphanius, Osseans), and their kindred sects the Nazarites, the Sampsaens and Elxaitens.\* Between these and the half Christian Jews a coalition was soon formed : the latter brought with them their faith in Jesus Christ, the latter added it to their own Essenian doctrines. This appears to have been the origin of the Ebionites. They derived their name from the Hebrew word, which signifies *poor*, on account of their voluntary poverty and community of goods, for the origin of which they appealed to the ordinance of the apostles. They were, so they taught, the descendants of those who sold their possessions, and laid them at the apostles' feet.†

According to their doctrines, the birth of Jesus was

\* According to the description of Epiphanius, there was no distinction among these sects. It is not therefore improbable that they were only grades or classes of the same sect.

† Many of the ancient fathers speak of a man named Ebion, as the founder of this sect ; and Epiphanius, who on account of his residence in the country of the Ebionites, may be supposed to have been well acquainted with them, also mentions Ebion, who after the destruction of Jerusalem retired into the region of Cocabè, Nabatea and Pella, and became the author of the sect bearing his name. His narration may however be doubted, as in it he relates the interview between St. John the Evangelist and Cerinthus in the bath, as occurring with this same Ebion. The sect had, however, a particular founder or teacher, whose authority was supreme. This founder (probably Thebutis, mentioned by Epiphanius) might have assumed the surname of Ebion, or "the poor." Epiphanius speaks also of Elxai, as the author of the union of the Ebionites from Jerusalem with the Essenians. Elxai lived in the time of Trajan, and wrote a book containing theosophistic doctrines. This union, however, was not complete. A party of the Ebionites did not adopt the Essenian doctrines ; and taught, according to Epiphanius, that Christ was a mere man, a prophet in whom the supreme Spirit resided.

not the effect of a miracle, but that on account of his great virtues he was made worthy to receive the Christ, and to be called the Son of God. At his baptism in the Jordan, the heavenly Messiah descended upon him in the form of a dove, and entered into him. This Messiah, the most noble of all spirits created by, or emanating from, God, the ruler of all things, appeared first in Adam; it manifested itself under veils of flesh to the prophets; and lastly united itself with Jesus, after whose crucifixion and resurrection it returned to heaven. To him was opposed Satan, to whom the dominion of this lower visible world, as to the Christ the rule of the future heavenly kingdom, had been granted by the Supreme Deity. The Ebionites taught also a certain, though not absolute, Dualism. The object of the various manifestations of the Christ, was the founding and establishment of a pure religion; that the mission of Jesus, after the descent of the Christ upon him, was to purify and strengthen Judaism, and to impart it, in its renewed form, to the Gentiles, as the only source of salvation. As the Ebionites, as well as the Essenians, rejected all sacrifices, Jesus is made to speak thus in the Ebionite gospel: "I am come to destroy sacrifice, and if you cease not to slay victims, the anger of God shall remain upon you." They granted only to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, and Joshua, the dignity of inspired prophets; they rejected all others as usurpers of that sacred name. Whatever displeased them in the Pentateuch, they considered as additions of later ages. In other things the Ebionites believed as the Jews; so that Origen might say of them that they differed in little from them. They observed circumcision, the Sabbath, and the other precepts of the law. To justify their practice of circumcision, they alleged the example of Jesus,—and citing his words, "It is sufficient for the disciple to be as his master,"—they said, Jesus was circumcised, be you also circumcised, for circumcision was the seal and mark of the patriarchs and of all the just, who had lived according to the law. The



apostle St. Paul they declared an apostate and deceiver; they therefore rejected his works. He was, they said, by birth not a Jew but a Gentile, and had become a proselyte in the hope of obtaining in marriage the daughter of the high-priest; in his disappointment and revenge, he wrote against circumcision, the Sabbath, and the whole law. St. Peter, and after him, St. James, the brother of the Lord, were their ideal of perfection, and both are represented in their apocryphal books as Jewish ascetics.\* They themselves adopted the ascetic life of the ancient Essenians; they abstained from all flesh, and from all food proceeding from animals; they bathed daily in flowing water, to which they attributed the virtue of purifying them from every stain; they refused to take oaths, which they considered unlawful. They avoided all intercourse with strangers, as they would have considered themselves thereby defiled. Celibacy was at first in great esteem amongst them, but in the time of St. Epiphanius it was no longer practised; they then recommended early marriage, and permitted divorce and second espousals. They had elders and synagogues, baptism and sacred evening meals, at which they drank only water, which, according to St. Epiphanius, they honoured as almost divine. They forbade the use of wine, as being the production of an evil principle.

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\* St. James is thus mentioned by Hegesippus (apud. Euseb. ii. 23); "He was holy from his mother's womb; wine and strong drink he did not drink; neither did he eat of flesh; the scissors never touched his head; he anointed not himself with oil; he frequented not the baths; he wore not woollen, but linen garments." From this passage it has been thought by some writers that Hegesippus was an Ebionite; this cannot have been, for he states that the result of his journeys, undertaken for this express purpose, had been, that he had found an uniformity of faith in all the Churches which he visited, in the east and west. An Ebionite could not have written thus. If, in a fragment preserved by Stephen Gabarus (apud Routh, i. 203), he seems to reject the expression, "that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and that it hath not come into the heart of man to conceive, the good things prepared by God for those who love him," by a reference to Matt. xiii. 16, he certainly does not wish to differ from St. Paul, but only to refute a misinterpretation of the Gnostics. This description of the Nazarean life of the apostle, he probably drew from an apocryphal book, cited by St. Epiphanius, entitled, *Αναβαθμοὶ Ἰακώβου*.

The Ebionites had their own gospel, which they named "The Gospel of the Hebrews." If it be true that the gospel of St. Matthew was the foundation of this book, it had been modified by great changes and frequent omissions, to suit the principles of the sect. The subject of the first and second chapters of St. Matthew was wanting; the circumstances attending the baptism of our Saviour were disfigured; and, as they rejected the use of animal food, instead of what we read in Luke xxii. 15, they wrote, "Have I ever at any time desired to eat the paschal lamb with you?" Amongst other apocryphal works, they possessed also a history of the apostles, and a doctrinal work attributed to St. James, in which he is made to inveigh against the temple and sacrifices, against the sacred fire, and the altar of incense. They had also a book of the "Travels of St. Peter." Either this, or another work of the same nature, was known under the name of the "Clementine Homilies," and contained the pretended travels of St. Clement with the apostle St. Peter, the instructions delivered by the latter, and his disputations with Simon Magus, and the philosopher Appian.\* This work, which was written in the second century, evidently contained the principles of the Ebionite doctrines, but with some modifications; whence we may conclude, that they are the doctrines of a sect of Ebionites differing from those described by St. Epiphanius. According to this book, there exists a primitive religion, which, from the beginning, was announced by Adam, the first of the prophets; then by the patriarchs, and by Moses: but was afterwards disfigured by the admission of many strange additions made in writing. To restore this religion to its primeval purity, and to separate that which was false from that which was true, contained in the pentateuch, was the object of the coming of Christ. His doctrine

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\* Three recensions of this work have come down to us. 1. The Homilies pretended to have been delivered by St. Clement, preserved in the original Greek. 2. *Recognitiones S. Clementis ad Jacobum fratrem Domini*, in the Latin translation of Rufinus. 3. A Greek Epitome of the Homilies.

was therefore no more than the ancient Mosaic law, as the divine spirit which appeared in Adam and Moses, was the same which dwelt in Jesus. From this cause, the disciple of Moses was equal to the disciple of Christ, each should respect the other, and confess that both were equally in the possession of the truth. In this system, Christ is accounted only as a prophet or teacher; his sacrifice of redemption is not mentioned, and his death is considered as purely accidental. The apostle St. Paul is not named throughout the entire work, although there are several polemical allusions to his writings.\* In this we can easily perceive an uniformity of teaching in the Clementine Homilies with the doctrines of the sect of Ebionites, of which St. Epiphanius has written, as also in the rejection of the divinity of Christ, in the belief of his birth according to the ordinary laws of nature, in the condemnation of sacrifices and oaths, in their esteem of daily bathings, and in the declaration that the pentateuch had been falsified by interpolations. We find also the dualism of the Ebionites, their disregard of the prophets, all of whom they rejected, except Adam, and the patriarch Moses, and Jesus. Of the apostles, none are named but Peter and James, the latter of whom they extolled as an observer of the law in its purity, to whom was given the power of proving and confirming all other apostles or teachers. The author of the Clementines considers the Mosaic law as limited in its destination; it is holy, but exacts not observance from all; the Gentile need follow only the doctrines of Jesus; he may not, however, hate or despise Moses, or his law. Finally, it is worthy of remark, that the late origin of the doctrine, and of the sect which professed it, may be learned from the internal evidence of the work.

Another Judaizing sect, differing from the Ebionites, was that of the Nazarites. They are first called by this name by SS. Epiphanius and Jerome. By the more ancient fathers they are, without distinction, called

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\* In the letter of Peter to James, prefixed to the Homilies (Cotel. PP. Apost. i. 608), there is an evident allusion to Galatians ii. 11.



Ebionites. They named themselves Nazarites, as this was the first appellation by which the disciples of Christ were known, and as the word Christian belonged to a language which to them was foreign. They also dwelt on the opposite side of the Jordan, in Berea, Decapolis, and Besanitis, or Cocabè. They separated themselves, however, from the Ebionites, principally because they acknowledged St. Paul to be the apostle of the Gentiles, and consequently that the Mosaic law, which they themselves continued to observe, was not obligatory on the Christians converted from paganism : they received also the whole of the Old Testament, and admitted the supernatural birth of the Messias. By the Jews, and by the Pharisees in particular, they were hated and condemned, not only because they believed Jesus to be the Messias, but because they declared the Pharisees to be morally, spiritually dead, and to have buried themselves and their followers in darkness. They applied the severest threats of the prophets to these hypocrites ; and the prediction of Isaias (chapter viii. 14,) that the Emmanuel should be “for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to the two houses of Israel,” they applied to the two famed schools of Schammai and Hillel. But, despite these doctrines, they were far removed from the pure faith of Christianity;\* they had in fact deformed it, by uniting with it the more ancient Jewish theosophystic principles, for they were descended from the Essenians, or some other Jewish sect connected with them. This is evident from the fragments, which have been preserved by St. Jerome, of their Hebrew Gospel.†

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\* Le Quien, in his *Diss. de Nazareis*, and Pruden. Maran, in his work, *Divinitas Christi, manifesta in Scripturis et Traditione*, Paris, 1746, p. 245, et seq., endeavours to prove, that the Nazarites were orthodox on this article of the Divinity of Christ. The former has been refuted by Mosheim, *Instit. His. Chris. majores*, Sæcul. I. p. 470. Maran has produced no new argument ; and has, moreover, erroneously stated the Clementines to have been a work of the Nazarites.

† The Gospel of St. Matthew formed the basis also of this gospel, which, St. Epiphanius says, was more ample than that of the Ebionites. It without doubt contained the account of the birth and youth of Jesus, which the Ebionite gospel omitted.

In these Jesus is represented as a man, who, before his baptism in the Jordan, was not free from sin,\* and upon whom the spirit of God first descended at his baptism. This is the narration: "But it came to pass, after the Lord had ascended from the waters, the fulness of the Holy Spirit came upon him, and said: 'My son, in all the prophets I awaited thy coming, that I might dwell within thee: thou art my beloved dwelling place, my first-born son, eternally thou shalt rule.'" In another place, Jesus calls the Holy Spirit his mother.† The Chiliasm which St. Jerome attributes to the Ebionites, must have belonged to the Nazarites: there is no trace of it to be found among the Essenian Ebionites, or in the Clementine homilies.

The third Judaizing sect, the Elxaites or Elkesaites, seem to have differed but little from the Ebionites; they sprung from one of the parties among the Jews which bore the same name. They existed in the second century, but did not find admission into any Christian community before the third, when Origen attacked them in a public discourse, and Alcibiades, of Apamea, opposed them. They believed, as Theodoret informs us, in two Christs—the one superior, the other inferior,—the man Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, which resided first in Adam and the patriarchs, and was afterwards united with Jesus. They possessed a book, which, as they pretended, fell from Heaven, and to which, or to its doctrines, they attributed a sin-remitting power: they also

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\* In one of these fragments. we read: "The mother of the Lord and his brethren said to him, 'John the Baptist baptizes for the forgiveness of sins; let us go and be baptized.' Jesus answered: 'In what have I sinned, that I should go and be baptized by him? What I then said must have been ignorance, (that is a sin, of which I was not conscious.')" We have a similar narration in another apocryphal book, the *Prædicatio Pauli*; see the treatise, "*De non iterando baptismo*, (ad *Calcem opp. Cypriani*.) In quo libro contra omnes scripturas et de peccato proprio confitentem invenies Christum, qui solus omnino non deliquit, et ad accipiendum Joannis baptismum pænè invitum a matre sua esse compulsus."

† In the passage preserved by Origen and St. Jerome: 'Ἀρτι ελαβε με ἡ μητηρ μου, τον αγιον πνευμα, εν μια των τριχων μου, και απενεγκε με εις το ορος το μεγα Θαβουρ.

rejected St. Paul, but their peculiar tenet was, that in the time of persecution it was lawful to deny Christ, and to sacrifice to the idols, provided the heart remained faithful. This, and the magic art, astrology, and the invocations of the dead, which they practised, would induce us to suppose that they had almost abandoned Judaism, and had borrowed more from heathenism than any other of the sects. They asserted that a constant revelation, of which the organs were persons of the family of their founder, existed amongst them. In the time of Epiphanius there were two sisters, descended from Elxai, who were esteemed by the sect as prophetesses, and revered with almost divine honours.

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## SECTION II.

### THE Gnostic SECTS—THEIR SIMILARITY—SIMON MAGUS—THE NICOLITES—CERINTHUS.\*

THE most wonderful phenomenon in religion during the first three centuries, was, without doubt, the sect of the Gnostics. It was, at the same time, the most powerful adversary which the Church had yet encountered, for it was with arms which it had borrowed from the Church that it combated against it. And, in fact, the

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\* Irenæus, *adv. Hæreses*, ed. Ren. Massuet, Paris, 1710; Tertull. *adv. Marcionem*, lib. v. *De præscrip. Hæreticorum*; *Adversus Valentinos*; *Contra Gnosticos Scorpianum*; (Pseudo-Origenis) *Dialogus contra Marcionitas*, ed. Westenius, Basil. 1673; Epiphanius, *adv. Hæreses*, opp. tom. i. ed. D. Petavius, Paris, 1622; Clemens Alexandrinus, et Origenes, *passim*; *Fragments of Gnostics*, collected in Massuet's edition of Irenæus, pp. 349-376.

J. Beausobre, *Hist. Critique de Manichée et du Manichéisme*, Amsterd. 1734-39, 2 vols. 4to.; E. A. Lewald, *Comm. de Doctrina Gnostica*, Heidelb. 1818; Neander's *Genetische Entwicklung der vornehmsten Gnostischen Systeme*, Berlin, 1818 (*Developement of the principal Gnostic Sects*); J. Matter, *Histoire Critique du Gnosticisme*, Paris, 1828, 2 vols.; J. A. Möhler, *Versuch über den Ursprung der Gnostiker* (*Essay on the Origin of the Gnostics*), Tubing. 1831-4; F. Munter, *Versuch über die Kirchlichen Alterthümer der Gnostiker* (*Essay on the Ecclesiastical Antiquity of the Gnostics*), Anspach, 1790.



Church triumphed over it not without loss, nor was the victory, which had been won so dearly, entire : for, from time to time, Gnosticism reared its head again, with various names, and under various forms, and in later ages drew many thousands to their fall.

The heretical Gnosis may be considered generally as a compound of heathenism and Christianity ; but inasmuch as it declared matter to be the principle of evil, it violently opposed the heathen adoration of nature. If, however, it retired on the one side as far as possible from paganism, on the other it fell back to it again, by its doctrine of the eternity of matter, by its distinction of an esoteric and exoteric religion, and many other errors. By this heathen syncretism of the Gnosis with Christian doctrines, must be understood not so much the theology of Greece and Rome, as the heathenism of the east—the Egyptian, Phœnician, Persian, and Bud-daist. The appearance of the gospel had excited a fervour and agitation of mind through the whole world. In the various relations of society, a religious feeling was awakened, and a thirst for a higher religious knowledge created. The ideas and dogmas of the religion of the people in the east were again awakened, and there appeared men, who, filled with these ideas, and with the doctrines of Christianity, and in particular with the doctrine of the redemption, were carried away by an enthusiasm to mingle the new with the old, to illustrate the one by the other, and to form of them a system of higher wisdom and religious knowledge ; not by a philosophical developement of their ideas, but, according to the oriental manner, by figures and representations. To their aid came in the Platonic philosophy, as it had been taught in the east, united with Judaism, by Philo, or by the precursors of the Neoplatonic schools.

But among the members of the Church, also, there had been manifested a spirit preparing the way, and leading to Gnosticism. Many Christians, who compared the moral degradation of the world, and the numbers of those who, on all sides, had given themselves to passion

and crime, with the sanctity of the Christian doctrines, thought that they beheld in the contrast an irreconcilable contradiction. The idea, that Christianity should have swept away this mass of iniquity,—that it should have destroyed the tyranny of vice, and have healed those numberless souls that had been poisoned by sin; that it would regenerate and restore all those relations of society, through which wickedness ran—like blood through the body, by a thousand veins,—this idea appeared to them as the delusion of superficial consideration. The Christians received from this world only odious scorn, bitter hatred, and bloody persecution: they appeared in the world, in which they were surrounded by enmity, as exiles from their home. They admitted, therefore, easily, the conviction, which was founded upon truth misunderstood, that they were citizens of another, a higher, and far removed from this lower, world; that there were two kingdoms, one of God, the other of evil, separated by an unpassable gulf; that the citizens of the kingdom of God were pursued by the citizens of this world of Satan, with a hatred inherent in their nature; and that the faithful Christian, who, as a child of the good God, had belonged to that higher world, was held only in passing in the bonds of this lower kingdom, and was destined to combat against triumphing evil, and to return for ever to his Father's home.\* As all teachers of error endeavour to justify

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\* This source of Gnosticism has been accurately traced by Möhler in the work above-mentioned. But we must not pass over the sources and beginnings of the same, which lay out of the Church, and we must observe, that many of the founders of the Gnostic sects were never members of the Church, but that they borrowed from it Christian ideas, with which, united to their heathen principles, they built up their Gnostic systems. It has too frequently happened, that only one element of the Gnosis, and only one corresponding source of Gnosticism, have been considered. From the times of the Fathers of the Church to the days of Mosheim, it was generally deduced from the Platonic philosophy. Buddeus had, indeed, considered the Jewish Cabbala among the sources, and was followed by Kleuker, as far as regarded the Gnostic doctrines of the *Æones* (On the Nature and Origin of the Doctrine of Emanations, amongst the Cabbalists; Riga, 1786). This view differs not much from that taken by Mosheim, that Gnosticism

their false doctrines by passages of the Sacred Scriptures, the defence of this idea may have been found in those words of our Saviour,—“ In me the prince of this world hath no part.”

The doctrines of the Church appeared defective and insufficient to the founders of Gnosticism : for, according to them, these doctrines could not fully explain the creation of the world, nor the origin of evil : they could not reply to these most important questions,—How can

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should be traced back to an universal oriental philosophy (which he separates too widely from the oriental religions) that prevailed in Chaldea, Persia, Syria, Egypt, and even in Judea. He was led to this conclusion by the title of the epitome of a work of Theodotus, a Valentinian, preserved by Clement of Alexandria : “ *Ἐκ του Θεοδοτου και της ανατολικης καλουμενης διδασκαλιας ἐπιτομας.*” Lewald has discovered sources of Gnosticism in the system of Zend. J. Schmidt (*On the Affinity of the Gnostic-Theosophistic Doctrines, and the Religious Systems of the East* ; Leipzig, 1828) places one of the causes of Gnosticism in Buddaism ; he is followed by Baur (*Tubing. Zeitschr. für Theologie*, 1828) in this opinion. There are certainly many points of resemblance in Buddaism and Gnosticism : in the three divisions of the region of light, and the highest of all light, the Nirwana, from which all beings spring ; for the first beings of light, multiplying themselves and degenerating, produce inferior creatures, until this lower world of bodies come into existence, we have the Pleroma, and the gradations of the *Æones*. The possibility that men may become free from this world of transitory appearances, the Sansara, and may return to the eternal Nirwana, or perfect liberation from matter, in the region of the purest sanctity, answers to the successive purifications and deliverance from matter, and the return to the Pleroma. The descent upon earth from time to time of deified men, who came in the appearance of bodies (*Maja*), to preserve the knowledge of true wisdom by their words and works, reminds us of the Adam-Christ, and of Dochetism. But there are, also, many evident discrepancies in the two systems. The dualism and demiurgon of the Gnostics correspond to nothing among the Buddaists. A more comprehensive hypothesis is given by Neander (*Ecc. His. vol. i. p. 633*) who imagines that in Gnosticism may be found elements of the ancient oriental, and in particular of the Persian and East Indian, systems of religion, combined with Jewish theology and Platonic philosophy. Matter, in his *History of Gnosticism*, (i. 45) thinks that the foundation of Gnosticism was laid in the works of Plato, and was enlarged by Philo, but that the immediate cause was the influence of Chaldaic and Persian learning modified by the Cabbala. To express our own belief, we must declare it to be our opinion, that Gnosticism sprung from Platonism, (particularly the Jewish-Alexandrian Platonism), from elements contained in the Asiatic and Egyptian religions, and from doctrines of Christianity misunderstood and misapplied.



the imperfections and corruption of the creature be reconciled with the goodness and wisdom of the Creator? How can the contradictions between the Old and New Testaments, and between the God of the Jews and the God of the Christians, be explained? Whence arises the difference amongst men, and in their conduct towards religion? Against the doctrine of the creation of the world from nothing, they brought the old axiom, "From nothing, nothing can be made." They had recourse to an emanation, or a developement of the Divine essence, which commenced with the first act of the developement of God,—with his first appearance from his invisible existence. Thence appeared, in order, the *Æones*, as different powers of the Divine essence. This system of emanations was explained by the similitudes, of a large torch spreading its rays around on every side,—of fountains and rivers, which, springing from the same vast ocean, flow over the earth,—of the progression to infinity of varying quantities from one original number, as it had been expressed by Pythagoras,—and, lastly, of the variations of tones proceeding from one instrument.

From this *Pleroma*, the dwelling seat of the Deity and of the spirits emanating from him, this lower world of change and decay, of misery and vice, is separated by immeasurable space. This world arose from an eternally existing, shapeless, rude, and dark mass: it was organically formed and modelled by an *Æon*, one of the lowest in the order of those emanating from God, and which had been either driven from the *Pleroma*, or sent by the supreme Godhead. He, the *Demiurgos*, rules and directs, with the aid of his assisting angels and inferior spirits, this visible world which he created. This creator of the world and his angels are described in the Gnostic system as servants dependant on the great God, acting unconsciously according to his will: at other times, they are described as having turned away from him, and, yielding to base passion, have become hostile to all those beings who sprung from God, and remained faithful to him. The souls of men, being part of the

world of emanations, were originally of Divine birth, but having been driven from their native region, the Pleroma, have sunk into matter, or have been mingled with it. Their destiny is to combat evil, which, as an independent power, holds its seat in matter ; to free themselves from all bonds of this matter by which they are shackled, and to return, purified from all stains caused by this association, back to their higher spheres. To this doctrine of a dualism we must attribute the introduction of a severe asceticism among the Gnostics, who sought by this means to free themselves from the captivity in which this world confined their souls, and to purify themselves from the stains which the spirit had contracted in its contact with matter.

The Gnostic schools taught that Judaism was a revelation of the Demiurgos, but that multitudes of carnally minded Jews had imagined that this creator of the world, who had manifested himself in the Old Testament, was the supreme God. Those Gnostics who reputed the Demiurgos to be a servant of the author of all being, recognized a concealed truth in the Old Testament, and esteemed Judaism as a divine preparation for Christianity : those, on the contrary, who maintained that the Demiurgos was no more than a wicked and malicious spirit, saw in the Old Testament only a true representation of his own nature, a means employed by him to keep men in slavery, or in an ignorance of their divine origin. To destroy this ignorance, and to reveal to men their hitherto unknown God, Christ, the highest, or one of the highest, of the *Æones*, descended from the Pleroma ; and the Gnostics, according to their different ideas of the Demiurgos, taught that he voluntarily subjected himself to Christ, or violently opposed him. With regard to the person of the Redeemer, they either denied the reality of his human appearance, and taught, that as he could not enter into strife with the evil which resided in matter, he possessed only the phantom of a body ; or they imagined only a temporary union of the higher with the inferior Christ, his organ and instrument ; which union, they said, commenced at

the baptism in the Jordan. The Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body was necessarily rejected by all these different sects.

The errors of the Gnostics began so early to intrude themselves into the Christian Churches, that the apostles St. Paul and St. John found it necessary to warn the faithful against them.

Thus St. Paul, in his first epistle to Timothy, (chap. i. 4) requires his disciple to warn certain persons "not to give heed to fables and genealogies without end;" and in the conclusion of the epistle, he conjures Timothy to avoid "profane novelties of words and oppositions of knowledge, (Gnosis) falsely so called." In the first epistle of St. John, also, we may discover allusions to a Gnostic doctetism.

But the history of the founders of the Gnostic sects, in the apostolic ages, as well as these founders themselves, are concealed under a thick veil of obscurity. Thus also is hidden the history of the Samaritan magician Simon, who is designated by the ancients as the patriarch of all heresies, and in particular of Gnosticism. In the acts of the apostles, he names himself the "great power of God." What he thereby intended to express, we learn from the Clementine Homilies, and from the account of St. Epiphanius. He declared himself to be a power flowing from the supreme Godhead; and his wife Helena, who had also emanated from God, to be the soul of the world, but then held in captivity by matter. To liberate her, and to restore universal order and harmony, were the objects of his descent upon this earth.\* How far the doctrines of the sect, who were

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\* St. Justin, St. Irenæus, and Tertullian, relate that Simon acquired so great celebrity in Rome by his skill in magic, that a statue, with the inscription "Simoni Deo sancto," was erected to him. In the year 1574, a stone was found in Rome in the place specified by St. Justin—the island in the Tiber, bearing upon it these words, "Semoni Sanco Deo fidio sacrum." This Sancus was a demigod (Semo) honoured by the Sabines; and it is now thought by some writers that a statue erected to him misled St. Justin, who, being a Greek, might have mistaken the words *Semoni Sanco* for *Simoni Sancto*. But the statue to Sancus was erected by a private individual; that mentioned by St. Justin, by a de-



from him called Simonians, were derived from him, it is now impossible to discern. It cannot be called a Christian heresy, as it contained scarcely one Christian doctrine. It acknowledged, indeed, by its syncretism, a revelation of God in the person of Christ. The one God, so the Simonians taught, revealed himself to the Samaritans, as the Father ; to the Jews, as the Son of God, in Christ ; and to the Gentiles, as the Holy Ghost. The Entycheti, a sect springing from the Simonians, by removing all the laws of morality, which they termed the arbitrary impositions of the spirits that rule this world, opened the broad road of all iniquity and crime.

Similar to these were the antinomistic principles of the Nicolaites, a Gnostic sect, which claimed, for its founder, Nicolas, one of the seven deacons who were placed by the apostles in the Church of Jerusalem. As the Ebionites boasted that St. James was their apostle, so the Nicolaites assumed to themselves the deacon Nicolas ; but, according to the Alexandrian Clement, an ill-advised action, and a misinterpreted expression of Nicolas, were their only claims to this assumption. It is more than probable, that the Nicolaites of whom St. John speaks in his Apocalypse (ii. 6, 15) belonged to this sect, and were the same with the disciples of Balaam mentioned in the verse immediately preceding.

In the doctrines of Cerinthus, if he indeed taught the Judaic principles that are attributed to him, there is a more perceptible combination of Jewish and Gnostic ideas than in the system of the Ebionites. He had made himself master in Egypt of the Alexandrian philosophy, and went into Asia Minor and to Ephesus, where he became the founder of a sect at the time when St. John the apostle resided there. According to him, this world was formed by a spirit greatly inferior to the great God, but which recognized no authority in him ; this spirit

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cree of the senate. The expression *Fidius* also renders the mistake improbable. It is well known that statues and even temples were erected to other Gœtes, such as Apollonius of Tyana ; and it is difficult to suppose that Tertullian, who was so intimately acquainted with the Roman paganism, could have fallen into so great an error.

was the author of the Mosaic law, and the ruler of the people of Israel. The man Jesus was the son of Mary and of Joseph, and was raised above other men only by his virtues ; until at his baptism, the Christ, who was superior to all other heavenly spirits, united himself with him, to impart to him, (and by him to other men) the knowledge of the before unknown true God. This heavenly spirit operated through Jesus as by an instrument, and worked miracles through him, but at length forsook him and returned again to heaven. Jesus, thus abandoned, suffered and died, but was raised from the dead. Cerinthus presented to his followers the prospect of an earthly kingdom of Christ in the glorified Jerusalem, under types and figures, which his adherents and his opponents have, perhaps without reason, interpreted of pleasures and delights of sense. It is greatly contested, whether he insisted upon an observance of the Mosaic law: St. Irenæus is silent on this subject, but St. Epiphanius testifies that he acknowledged an authority in a part of the law, probably the moral part. That St. John wrote his gospel to confute the errors of the Nicolaites, and particularly of Cerinthus, we have the unanimous testimony of SS. Irenæus, Epiphanius, and Jerome.

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### SECTION III.

CONTINUATION : BASILIDES, SATURNINUS, VALENTINUS AND HIS FOLLOWERS.—THE OPHITES :  
CAPOCRATES.

BASILIDES was a teacher in the school of Alexandria, at the commencement of the second century. His native land was Syria, or a province more to the east. He taught, that the Supreme first Being was nameless and ineffable, for as soon as a being could be named, it became created. He taught also, that at first seven powers emanated from the hidden Supreme Being, which were the hypostatic, intellectual, and moral properties of

the Godhead, and that these, with their original, formed the first perfect, holy Ogdoas. From this first, there descended a second order of spirits, far inferior to the first, and so in continuation, until the number of the regions of spirits amounted to 365. These various emanations from the first great source were comprehended, according to the numerical value of the Greek letters, in the mystic word of the Basilidians, *Abraaxas*. Opposed to this world of emanations, there has stood from eternity a kingdom of evil ; and in process of time, elements from the region of light became mingled with matter in the kingdom of darkness. The Archon, or first angel of the lower world of spirits, as the instrument of the Divine Providence, created this earth, whence has ensued a greater discord, that of the souls descending from the kingdom of light, with the matter which confines them. The object of the world's course is to effect the separation of the elements of these two hostile kingdoms ; and in this lies the victory of the kingdom of light over matter, which being deprived of its living power by this separation, shall fall back into its original impotence. In consequence of his idea, that all life is only a course of purification, Basilides adopted the system of a migration of souls through all nature, and consequently a relationship of all earthly being. Respecting the person of our Redeemer, his doctrines were similar to those of Cerinthus ; the highest divine power, the divine intelligence, united itself with the man Jesus, at his baptism in the Jordan. The Archon, whom the carnally-minded Jews had honoured as the Supreme God, acknowledged in Jesus a being far above himself, and submitted to the divine ordinances. Redemption consisted in this, that the Messiah brought the spiritual natures, which had hitherto been detained in captivity, to a knowledge of the Author of all being, and of their own heavenly origin, to which knowledge succeeded the separation of natures belonging to this lower world from those of the kingdom of light, and the consequent deliverance of the latter from the dominion of the Archon. His sufferings affected only the man Jesus ;



they were not connected with the work of redemption; and were advantageous only, as are all earthly sufferings, to his own purification.

The variation of opinions in an age of so great excitement, the discrepancy, and the collision of the different systems which were soon introduced, occasioned the departure of the later Basilidians from many of the doctrines of their master. They considered the Archon, or the God of the Jews, as a haughty and ambitious being: as Dochetists, they taught that Simon of Cyrene had been crucified in the deceptive form of Jesus; that the Heavenly Redeemer had taken the semblance of Simon, and, deriding the Jews, had returned to the kingdom of light. It was foolish, they said, to aspire to martyrdom; as those who suffered that death, suffered only for him who bore the assumed appearance of Jesus. The spirit of pride, which their doctrines of the superiority of their Heaven-born natures above the natures of this lower world, engendered, led to that depravation of morals, which arose among the later Basilidians: they were, as they maintained, holy and perfect by their nature, and claimed, therefore, an exemption from all laws and restraint.

Almost similar to this was the system constructed by Saturninus, who was cotemporary with Basilides, and resided at Antioch. In the lower world of spirits that had sprung from the nameless God, he taught that there were seven angels who ruled the universe, the authors of the visible creation, against whom Satan, who considered them as invaders of his rights, stood in perpetual hostility. To retain the light which beamed upon them from the highest heavens, and filled them with a sacred ardour, they formed man, who, however, as the production of imperfect beings, lay like to a worm upon the earth, until the Supreme God animated him by a spark of his vivifying power. Human souls, thus constituted, are destined to return to the kingdom of light. To these heavenly-formed souls, there are opposed others, incited by Satan in their hatred. To free the former from the God of the Jews, and to

strengthen them against the demons and demoniacal men, the highest æon, sent by God, descended upon this earth, but only in an apparent body, as he could not unite himself with any part of this material world.

More artificial, and more poetical, was the system imagined by Valentinus, who taught at Alexandria about the year 133, and later at Rome, where he was three times expelled from the Church. From the Bythos, there emanated a series of thirty orders of æones, of which some were male, others female. These æones are hypostatic ideas, the authors of all natural and spiritual life. The Enthymesis or Achamoth, which was born of the Sophia, the last of the æones, and had fallen from the Pleroma, animated all matter, and produced three orders of beings,—the spiritual, physical, and hylic natures. The natural Demiurgos formed, in imperfect representation of the Pleroma, a new world, of which he is the ruler, while Satan, the king of the hylic natures, governs here upon earth. The Demiurgos, the God of Judaism, promised to his dependants a natural Messias, with which the æon Jesus, or the Saviour, united himself, at the time of his baptism in the Jordan, and perfected the work of redemption. This was effected by the annunciation of doctrines to the spiritual natures,—by doctrines and miracles to the physical order,—which, as it possessed not the internal testimony of truth, could be brought to faith only by external authority. The sufferings and death of Christ possessed, in the Valentinian system, no real value, as only the natural man suffered, and was crucified: the Saviour abandoned him when he was conducted to Pontius Pilate.

Of these three orders of men, the hylic, or the material, necessarily rejected the doctrines of salvation, as not appertaining to them: the physical were enabled, by their faith and good works, to attain to a lower degree of beatitude; the spiritual, the salt of the earth, the elect, could not be lost, but would infallibly arrive at their happy destiny, by returning to the Pleroma, when the world should have run through its course. The physical order shall then enjoy, in company with the

Demiurgos, a limited felicity; but the material, the gross, and with them all that are evil, shall be deprived of the life which they have usurped: the fire which lay concealed within them shall burst forth and destroy them, and they shall return to their ancient nothing.

The disciples of Valentinus adhered not strictly, as we may suppose, to the arbitrary system of their master. They preserved, indeed, the foundation, but introduced various modifications of those doctrines, especially, which regarded the Redeemer. Axionicus, of Antioch, alone defended the entire Valentinian system. Secundus deduced that spirit (the Sophia) which fell by its own presumption, not from the thirty æones, but from a generation of inferior angels, that the Pleroma might be preserved free from all imperfection. There has been preserved an epistle of Ptolemy to a certain Flora, whom he wished to allure to his Valentinian belief. Heracleon composed a commentary on the Gospel of St. John, from the fragment of which, preserved by Origen, we learn how the Gnostic teachers forced the sacred Scripture to suit their own doctrines. Colorbasus appears to have introduced essential modifications into the system of Valentinus. He admitted the primitive Ogdoas, but taught that it sprung simultaneously, not successively, from the Bythos, and was not permanent in its attributes; so that one and the same spirit was, in one manifestation, the Father; in another, Truth; and in a third, Man.\* The Valentinian Marcus presumed to penetrate more deeply than any of his predecessors into the nature of the Godhead. He divided the incomprehensible essence, to which no one had dared to attribute the predicate of being, into a Tetras, the ineffable, the most holy, revealed only to the perfect, and from which all the æones had emanated. The Tetras descended in the form of a female, from the invisible and nameless

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\* The Valentinians imagined an æon, *Ἀνθρωπος* (the first man, Adam or Kadmon), the offspring of the *Λόγος* and *Ζωή*, who in the Pleroma is the manifestation of God, as man represents the Supreme God in this lower world. Hence some of them said: "When God revealed himself he was called Man."



regions, and revealed to him the mysteries of the world of æones. One of the most famed of the Gnostics was the Syrian Bardasenes of Edessa, a renowned scholar, and author of many works. He did not separate himself from the Church, for in public he maintained no erroneous tenets, and only in secret assemblies divulged his Gnostic principles. His spiritual hymns and canticles, in which he made known his errors—the sighings of Achamoth, sunk in Chaos, for the divine light—spread his doctrines widely amongst the Syrians. The Syrian father, St. Ephraim, in a later age, composed Catholic hymns to counteract the effect of those of Bardasenes. The system of this Gnostic appears to have been partly Valentinian, and partly Ophitic.\*

Tatian, the Assyrian, whom we enumerated above amongst the Christian apologists, fell into Gnosticism after the death of his master, St. Justin. He founded a system of æones similar to that of Valentinus, and drew from the Gnostic doctrines of the evil nature of matter, a severe asceticism; he rejected marriage, and forbade the use of flesh-meat and wine. His numerous followers bore the appellation of Encratites, or *the Continent*. To the same order of Gnostics belonged the Apotactices, who rejected marriage, and the private possession of wealth; also, the Severians, descended probably from one of the Judaizing sects, who denied authority to the epistles of St. Paul, and to the Acts of the Apostles. Julius Cassian names Clement as the most conspicuous teacher of Dochetism, and as the author of a book against matrimony.

The sect of the Ophites is remarkable, as it outlived all the other Gnostic parties. Their doctrine coincided in many things with the Valentinian, but differed from it, especially on the subject of the Demiurgos, and his production, Judaism. They taught that the Bythos, and the immoveable dark water, or Chaos, had existed together from eternity. From the Bythos, arose God,

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\* Eusebius, *Præpar. Evang.* vi. 10, has preserved a considerable portion of his book, *περι εμαρμενης*, which was presented by him to the emperor Antoninus Verus.

the Father of all things, named also the first man. From him emanated, as a second æon, the Ennoia, the son of man : then followed the third, or female æon, the Holy Ghost, the mother of all living creatures. From this emanation proceeded the human æon Christ, and the weaker female æon, Sophia. The first four, the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, and Christ, formed, in a sacred union in the Bythos, the holy Heavenly Church. The Sophia sank into the Hyle, the dark water, and was there surrounded by a gross body, which it threw off as often as it attempted to return to the region of light. Its abode was finally established in the midway between the world of light and the Hyle. In its exile from the higher kingdom it gave birth to Jalbadoath, the son of Chaos, the name by which the Ophites designated the Demiurgos. This Jalbadoath was haughty, ambitious, and wicked, and produced six angels, spirits of the stars, which were in nature like to himself. He and his angels formed for themselves kingdoms, the seven heavens of the planets. They then created man, the representative of themselves, with an ethereal body, which Jalbadoath animated by an infusion of the spirit of life, whence that light which dwelt within him from his birth, descended upon man, and made him no longer a representation of Jalbadoath and his spirits, but of the Supreme God, the first man. In his hatred to man, who now no longer subjected himself to him, but to the great God, Jalbadoath created from matter the Ophiomorphos, or the wicked spirit of the serpent : but the Sophia, resolving to frustrate the ambitious designs of her son, employed the spirit of the serpent to tempt men (whom Jalbadoath had left in ignorance of their higher destinies, that he might the more securely hold them in slavery), to a disobedience of the commands which had been imposed upon them. By eating of the forbidden fruit, their souls became enlightened, and they turned themselves from Jalbadoath to the Supreme Author of all being. In punishment of their transgression, they were expelled by Jalbadoath from the ethereal region, the paradise, which they had hitherto inhabited, into

the dark, lower world, where their ethereal bodies were exchanged for others, dark, gross, and suited to this earth. The Ophiomorphos, who was punished at the same time, and in the same manner, produced other six spirits of this world. These seven princes of darkness now hate and persecute mankind, and, by tempting them to sin, endeavour to draw them now from the Supreme God, as they had before from Jalbadoath. Against them and Jalbadoath, the Sophia combats to preserve in man the memory of his origin, and the knowledge of his relation with the kingdom of light. The Jews worship Jalbadoath, whom they erroneously suppose to be the Supreme God: the wicked, and all idolaters, are subjected to the serpent. The sighs of the Sophia drew down upon earth the Heavenly Christ, who was sent by God to redeem those who still retained within them seeds of Heavenly light. He was first united with the redeemed Sophia, and afterwards with the man Jesus, who was born of the Virgin, and whom Jalbadoath had destined as *his* Messias. Jalbadoath, being thus deluded, effected, by means of his Jews, the crucifixion of the man Jesus: the Christ and the Sophia had, however, previously departed from him, and returned to the kingdom of light. They thence imparted to him a vivifying power, by which he arose from the dead, and was clothed with an ethereal body. When at length all supernal light shall have left this lower world, and have been borne by Jesus to the Christ and the Sophia to the region of the æones, then shall follow the end of the world.\*

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\* The Ophites represented their doctrines by figures on a diagram: this table fell into the hands of Celsus, who published it as a representation of the Christian dogmas. A description may be seen in Origen, (adv. Celsum, l. vi.) From this description, Matter, in his "Hist. du Gnosticisme" has given a plate. See, in Mosheim's "Essay on an impartial History of Heresies," illustrations of the history of the serpent-brothers. Helmst. 1746. Also, J. H. Schumacher's "Illustrations of the obscure and difficult doctrine-table of the ancient Ophites." Wolfenbittel, 1756. On this diagram were represented the kingdom of light, with different circles, to designate the Bythos and the æones: in the second division were the middle world, or the seven kingdoms of the spirits of the stars, and the names of these rulers. From this higher



The Ophites were divided into sects violently opposed to each other. Some of them taught that it was the Sophia itself which assumed the form of the serpent and allured man to transgress the commandments of the Creator of the world; others believed that the heavenly Christ appeared to man under the appearance of the serpent in Paradise, for which reason Moses raised up in the desert the serpent of bronze. They therefore offered to the serpent a religious honour; and from them the whole party were named Ophites. Some branches of them seem to have existed before the time of Christ; those whom Origen knew in Egypt possessed amongst them nothing of Christianity. Most unchristian were those pantheistic Ophites, who taught the existence of an universal soul, from which all things flowed, and to which all things would again return. In one of their apocryphal books, the Gospel of Eve, the contents of which, it was said, she received from the serpent of Paradise, were these words: "I stood upon a high mountain, and beheld a man of large stature, and another very small; and I heard a voice as of rolling thunder, which said, 'I am thou, and thou art I; where thou art, there also I am, for I pervade all things. If thou wishest thou canst gather me up, but in so doing thou only collectest thyself.'"

Similar in many respects to the Ophites, were the Sethians and the Cainites. The former considered Seth, whom the Sophia had substituted for the murdered Abel, as the father of the pneumatic or spiritual natures: they taught also, that he again appeared in the person of Jesus, as the redeemer of the world. The Cainites inferred from their doctrine of the distinction between the Creator of the world, the God of the Jews, and the supreme God, that all those who have been punished by the God of the Jews, and who were repre-

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world, the lower was separated by a dark belt, the hedge of evil (*φραγμος κακιας*): here the seven wicked spirits were represented under the form of wild beasts. The diagram contained also forms of prayers and spells, which the souls of the departed employed to prevent the passing of the spirits of the stars through their kingdom.

sented as evil doers in the Old Testament, were spiritual men, of the race of the Sophia, who had subjected themselves to the ambition of the Demiurgos. They boasted that, as spiritual men, they were related to Cain, Cham, and Esau, to the turbulent Core, and the Sodomites. They gave the preference to Judas among the apostles, as he had been enabled by his gnosis to raise himself above their degraded state ; for as he knew that the rule of the Demiurgos would be destroyed by the death of Jesus, he hesitated not to accelerate it. As antinomians and contemners of the laws given by the God of the Jewish people, they tolerated and practised the grossest excesses.

Teachers of a like antinomistic gnosis were Capocrates and his son, Epiphanes of Alexandria. Everything Christian in their philosophico-religious syncretism had been so deformed, that their party might be called a heathen rather than a Christian sect. In their system, all things had sprung from the Monas, the father of all being, and should flow back again into his bosom. The visible world was formed by ambitious spirits that had rebelled against the Monas. They rule over this their creation ; but so iniquitous are their laws, that it is the duty of man to withdraw himself from their power by acquiring a true knowledge of the Monas. In all nations, individual, extraordinary men, as Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and Jesus, have possessed this gnosis, and thereby freed themselves from the laws of this world,—from the circumscribing religions of the gross multitude. This, they taught, was the signification of the word Jesus, “ Truth shall make you free.” He who has obtained this gnosis, is powerful and exalted as the angels, like unto God, and in possession of a perfect imperturbable peace. Jesus was no more than the son of Mary and Joseph, but his soul had preserved, from its primitive state, when it was yet enclosed in the Monas (*ἐν τῇ περιφορᾷ τοῦ ἀγνωστοῦ πατρὸς*), a clearer remembrance of the Divinity. Hence could he more easily, by the elevation of contemplation, unite himself with the Monas ; from this union there flowed upon

him a divine power, by which he was enabled to free himself, not only from the moral, but also from the physical laws of this world; by which he wrought miracles, and established a true religion in the place of the Jewish dispensation. But the souls of other men might become pure as the soul of Jesus; and many of the followers of Capocrates hesitated not to exalt themselves above the apostles. Prayers and good works they esteemed no more than as external and vain practices; and he, they said, who deemed them of any worth, was a slave to the inferior Gods, who were the authors of the many forms of worship which were found in the world, and should continue to be their slave even after death, as his soul would migrate into other bodies. Only by faith and love, that is, by an absorption of the soul into the Monas, could man obtain peace in this world, and beatitude in a future life. Epiphanes (who died when a youth of only seventeen years of age, and was deified by the inhabitants of Same in Cephallene, the birth-place of his mother), taught in his book, *On Justice*, that nature itself had instituted a community of all things among mankind; that human laws perverted all good order; that men, by their false maxims, which warred with the principles that God had implanted in them, first introduced sin into the world. Such ideas might well be the cause of the awful depravity of the Capocratians, recorded by St. Epiphanius.

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#### SECTION IV.

##### MARCION.

ESSENTIALLY differing from the sects which we have hitherto examined, more free from oriental theosophy, and less unchristian, was the sect founded by Marcion. He had been excommunicated by his father, bishop of Sinope in Pontus, either on account of the errors which he had begun to teach in his native city, or on account of his immorality. He arrived in Rome



about the middle of the second century, where, being rejected by the clergy, he united himself with a man named Cerdo, a Syrian Gnostic, and formed a system of his own doctrines mingled with Gnostic ideas. To spread more widely his theories, he undertook several journeys: he combated with pagans and with Christians, and by the contradictions which he encountered and the sufferings which he endured, he became more obstinate in his errors. "Companions in hatred, companions in suffering," (*συμμισθονεμοι και συνταλαιπωροι*) were the titles with which he addressed his adherents. But, as Tertullian relates, he repented of his separation from the Church, and supplicated that he might be again received into the number of the faithful. This was promised to him, if he would labour to bring with him into the Church all those whom he had led into error. He died before he could effect his purpose.

Marcion excluded from his system the Gnostic emanations and the doctrine of the *æones*. Neither did he admit the dualism: but, in its place, he imagined three eternal, independent beings;—the good God, whose essence is mercy and love; the Demiurgos, the Creator of the world, who knows not love, but only justice, who is not perfectly good or holy, nor totally evil; and matter, which being in itself evil, is the source of all evil, and of which Satan was the producing cause. Only the first is truly God; the Demiurgos is improperly called by that name. He formed the world, and a part of matter, (which Satan wrested from him); not according to ideas which he had received from the great God, but according to his own views and his own will: when completed, his work was too weak to withstand the opposition of matter, or of the evil contained in the world. As he is not himself essentially good, so were none of his productions free from evil: the whole world has nothing in connexion with the good God. In the human body, which he called into existence, and which was moreover formed from the vicious Hyle, there lay implanted, evil, sensual inclinations. The soul, which the Demiurgos breathed into it, bore the germ of evil within it, and was too feeble

to conquer the passions of the body ; and it was not before the good God had descended upon earth, that the possibility of acquiring virtue was imparted to men.

Before the time of Christ, the true God was unknown to mankind. The Demiurgos was adored by all. He imposed upon the first man a severe command, which Satan incited him to transgress. Man, who, if he had had anything divine in his nature, would have victoriously resisted the temptation, fell before his enemy ; and in the physical and moral evils which rushed in upon him and his descendants, experienced the resentment of his cruel master. Matter and the wicked spirit exercised dominion over him, and hence arose idolatry and vice in all its forms. Only a few—the patriarchs—continued true to the Demiurgos, and were rewarded in the enjoyment of many temporal blessings. One nation was selected by him, to which he revealed himself, but which he burdened with the oppressive law of Moses : he recompensed those who observed this law, by conferring upon them, after death, a limited felicity in Scheol, in the bosom of Abraham. All other nations groaned beneath his indignation. He promised to his favoured people a Messias, who should collect their scattered tribes, who should establish a Jewish kingdom extending over the whole world, and should subject all things to the Demiurgos. The good God then resolved to manifest himself to men, under the name of the Redeemer that had been promised to the Jews. This belief was necessary, that he, the unknown God, might be made known to mankind. He descended from the highest heaven, and in the fifteenth year of Tiberius appeared in a phantasm form of man, in the synagogue of Capharnaum. He came as the herald of another God, the liberator of man from the tyranny of the Demiurgos, and as the opposer of his law. The miracles which he performed, bore witness to him ; but not the prophecies of the Old Testament, which were spoken, not of him, but of the Messias of the Demiurgos. All his doctrines and commandments were formed in opposition to those which the Demiurgos had delivered to

the Jews. This God of the Jews and the last of his prophets, the Baptist, trembled when they beheld the works of Christ; he resolved to banish this intruder from the world, and effected his design by urging the Jews to crucify him. Christ could not, indeed, really suffer, and die in a body which was not real; but his apparent sufferings, and death were the seal of his redemption. He then descended into ades or hell, not to bear happiness to those who had died under the Mosaic law, for they had been voluntarily subjected to the severe justice of the Demiurgos, but to announce salvation to the departed Gentiles, and to transport them to his heaven.

As the power of the Demiurgos was not overthrown by Christ, so neither had his promised Messiah yet come to reassemble the Jews, and to form them into a mighty empire. But all those, who by faith entered into a communion with the Redeemer, and by this communion have received a new divine principle of life (the πνευμα) have been redeemed for ever from the thralldom of the Demiurgos. Their bodies, inasmuch as they are sprung from matter, shall be destroyed; and their souls, thus freed, shall, by partaking of the holiness of the heavenly Father, be endowed with pure, ethereal bodies, like to the angels.\* To bestow blessings, redemption and beatitude, belongs to the nature only of the true God: He never chastises; the unbelieving and the wicked chastise themselves, by withdrawing themselves from their society with Him, and thereby falling under the indignant justice of the Jewish deity.

The system of Marcion introduced severe moral laws. He dissuaded his followers from matrimony, and commanded that baptism should be conferred only on those who passed their lives in celibacy, or upon those who, having contracted marriage, lived in continency. The majority of the Marcionites remained, therefore, in the

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\* Marcion therefore rejected the Christian doctrine of the resurrection, and taught that the souls of men, having thrown off their gross material bodies, shall return to heaven clothed in others, which shall possess none of the qualities of those which they now bear.



class of catechumens. The use of flesh meat was forbidden, but the eating of fish commanded. The Marcionites rejected with horror that doctrine of other Gnostic sects, that it was lawful to deny Christ, and many of them suffered martyrdom for their faith in him.

The basis of Marcion's doctrine was the imaginary contradiction between the law and the gospel. The Ebionites and the Nazarites stand at one extreme point, attempting to Judaize Christianity; and in the other we find Marcion, with his desire to reject without restriction all that was contained in the religion of the Jews, and in the Old Testament: in the midst stands the Church, which unites in her doctrines all that is true and pure from all that is false in the two conflicting systems. She must, therefore, have necessarily expected to be attacked by both parties, the forces of which were however mutually neutralized by their meeting from opposite points. Thus Marcion objected to the Church, that it had fallen back into Judaism: the apostles were not excepted from this accusation, for, according to his ideas, only St. Paul had preserved the genuine doctrines of Christ: the others had corrupted them by their Jewish prejudices; and for this reason, St. Paul was called by Christ himself to regenerate the gospel from Jewish defilements. He treated the books of the Old Testament with an unrestrained freedom; he rejected all which he could not accommodate to his own ideas, he formed for himself a canon of the New Testament, which contained only *his* gospel of St. Luke, and ten epistles of St. Paul. He mutilated the gospel of St. Luke, and altered those parts which differed from his doctrines. He cut away the first chapter, and commenced his book with these words:—"In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, God appeared in Capharnaum, a city of Galilee, and taught on the Sabbath-day."\* He was not less daring with the epistles of St. Paul, of which he received the following ten: the epistle to the Galatians, the two to

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\* See the Marcionite Gospel, restored by A. Hahn, in "Thilo Codex Apocryphus N. T." Lips. 1832.

the Corinthians, the epistle to the Romans, and two to the Thessalonians, those to the Laodiceans (Ephesians) to the Colossians, to the Philippians and to Philemon. He maintained that even these had been corrupted, and he therefore subjected them to the same arbitrary criticism with which he had disfigured the Gospel of St. Luke.

As a support to his system, Marcion composed his book *Of Antitheses*, which was intended principally for the use of those whom he wished to initiate in his doctrines. Its object was to demonstrate the contradictions between the Gospel and Judaism, the entire difference between the God of the Old and the God of the New Testament, between the Christ of the good God, and the Messias of the Creator of the world.\* The chief subjects which were there treated, appear to have been the following :—The Author of this world, is the author also of evil, which was proved from the words (xlv. 7) of the prophet Isaias ; the infinitely good God could not command this evil, but only permit it. This Creator is neither all-wise nor all-powerful ; for if so, he would not have suffered man, formed of his own substance, to have fallen into sin. He had shown himself passionate, revengeful and mutable, when he sometimes repented of his actions ; on the contrary, the God that was revealed by Christ, is a God of the purest love, who knows neither anger nor revenge : and being the most perfect essence, can never repent. In the same manner, the Christ of the Old Testament is different from the Saviour proclaimed in the New,—different in name as in work. The latter selected, not Levites, nor descendants of Aaron, but poor fishermen and publicans, to be his disciples : he announced a new and heavenly kingdom, whereas the Messias of the Demiurgos endeavoured only to restore and renew the ancient kingdom of the Jews : he exerted a degree of power far superior to the might of the Demiurgos. Finally, the precepts

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\* Compare A. Hahn, “*Antitheses Marcionis Gnostici, liber perditus, nunc quoad fieri potuit restitutus.*” Regiomonti, 1823.

of the old law contradict in many things the commandments of the gospel: the harsh right of revenge, permitted in the Old Testament, is opposed to the Christian precept of universal charity, and of the patient endurance of injuries and wrongs. The heavy weight of the ceremonial law contrasts with the freedom of the gospel, as does the permission of divorce granted to the Jews with the indissolubility of marriage re-established by Christ.

The sect of the Marcionites was in numbers one of the most extensive of the parties that had separated themselves from the Church; and as late as the fifth century, Theodoret relates that in his diocese he brought many of them back again to the true faith. In their treatment of the Scriptures, the disciples imitated the reckless freedom of their master. They refused to admit parts which he had preserved; they borrowed, at their pleasure, passages from the other gospels, especially from that of St. John, which, when so altered as to suit their ideas, they added to their own fictitious gospel: thus, they make Christ (Matt. v. 17) say the contrary to that which we read in the Gospel. "I am come," he says, according to them, "I am come not to fulfil the law, but to destroy it." Some of the Marcionites altered particular points in the system of their founder. Marcus took from the purely Gnostic doctrines, and in particular from those of Saturninus, the ideas, that the good God had co-operated in the creation of man, had imparted to him the spirit (*πνευμα*), which was lost by the fall into sin, and was restored by the redemption; that it was not immortal, for all those who had not participated in the redemption, and had consequently not recovered their spiritual principle, should be annihilated in death. The most famed amongst the Marcionites, was Apelles of Alexandria, who under the influence of the there established ideas of the Gnosis, introduced many important changes into the system of his master; so that his doctrines, as they are recorded by Tertullian, coincide more with those of Valentinian, than of Marcion.



## SECTION V.

PRINCIPLES OF THE Gnostics REGARDING THE SOURCES OF CHRISTIAN FAITH—THE CHURCH, TRADITION AND THE SACRED SCRIPTURES—THEIR RELATION TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH—THEIR MODE OF DIVINE WORSHIP.

IN its very origin, Gnosticism manifested that substance and character of heresy, which accompanied it, through centuries, in its multiplied and often changing forms of opposition to that Church which is ever one and the same. That which from the beginning constituted the essence of the Catholic Church,—its unity of doctrine, founded on the teaching of the Apostles, and on the assistance of that Divine spirit which ever dwells within it,—was rejected by the Gnostics; they wished to tear asunder this unity of faith; and as, without this unity, it is impossible to imagine a true Church, the Church cast them from her bosom, and could no longer number them amongst her children. They frequently complained that they were thus banished from the external communion of the faithful, for it was the design of many of their leaders to introduce into the Church a species of secret mysterious Christian learning, which they would withhold from the blind multitude of the physical creatures, who were attached to the common faith, which was adapted to their limited understandings; and to reveal the mysteries of their gnosis only to the spiritual natures who were endowed with a comprehension capable of truths more extensive and sublime. They therefore objected to the Church, that it had without cause excluded them from its communion; for they were careful to express themselves, when proposing their doctrines, in the language of the Church, that they might thereby veil their errors from the eyes of the incautious.

The Gnostics repudiated an humble faith in the *Church*, as worthy only of men who are spiritually blind or unclean, and incapable of more exalted knowledge. Mistaking the character of Christian faith, and the nature of pure Christian knowledge, they imagined that truth must be sought for by every one; and, in support of their imagination, had for ever in their mouths those words of our Saviour, "Seek and you shall find." The Christian, therefore, who has received from the Church his faith undisturbed by doubt, must renounce his possession, must take his stand again in infidelity and in the deep labyrinth of doubt, that he may divest himself of the chains of authority, and obtain a true and entire liberty of soul.\* But these Gnostic teachers of error, like most others who have taught that religious truth must be sought before it can be adopted, had already formed their judgments and resolved upon their faith; and their search was undertaken for no other purpose than to collect together whatever might give a colour of truth to their opinions.

In the same manner that the pagans had considered that an universal religion, adapted to all nations and to all men, was an impossibility, and would have treated the idea of such a catholic belief as an illusion, so the Gnostics imagined that a distinction of doctrines was necessary, and that an unity of belief could not be preserved in the different classes of men, which they had formed (the hylic, natural, and spiritual), of whom only a

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\* What we have here said of the Gnostics, we might say also of the heretics of modern times. True liberty of soul consists only in faith and in subjection to the authority of the Church: the freedom of search and investigation out of the Church is no more than the delusion of a deceitful phantom. For as moral freedom in nowise consists in an arbitrary determination, or doubt between good and evil, and as only he is really free who is fixed in his principles of morality, not he who has to discover them, so in faith, true freedom is not to be found in searching and re-searching, in selecting between truth and error. As long as a man is engaged in examining, vacillating and selecting, it is evident that he has not yet gained the truth, that he is not yet free, for truth maketh us free, says St. John, viii. 32. And here it is seen how moral and spiritual freedom are connected, or that it is only a true entire faith that can make us both morally and spiritually free.

small number could comprehend truth. Hence it appears, that they would have introduced into Christianity the heathen distinction of an esoteric and exoteric religion ; their boundless and arbitrary speculations, which gave birth to a multitude of conflicting systems, would have annihilated the uniformity of Christian faith ; and the One Church would have been replaced by the anarchical crowds of the pagan schools of philosophy. On this account also was gnosticism a falling back into heathenism.

To the appeal to the Church, the Gnostics opposed an appeal to the *Scriptures* ; for they maintained, as early as the second century, that the Church had been changed and corrupted ; that it required to be reformed and purified of all foreign and perverting additions. They must have placed this corruption, and this departure from the purity of primitive doctrines, in a very early period. Some of them taught, that the first Christians had not rightly comprehended the instructions of the apostles, and had therefore, from the beginning, but without design, misrepresented the genuine doctrines of Christ : in confirmation of this opinion, they adduced the severe reproofs of St. Paul, contained in his epistles to the Galatians and Corinthians. Others hesitated not to ascribe this corruption to the apostles, all of whom, or almost all (for St. Paul was generally excepted), they said, were to the last entangled in their Jewish prejudices. At other times they taught, that Christ and his apostles had accommodated themselves to the reigning errors of the people, and had answered those who sought wisdom of them according to the limited understandings of their interrogators. They even shamelessly asserted that Christ spoke equivocally, and that we must distinguish in his discourses the influence of the Demiurgos from that of the Sophia, or of the good God ; and that they alone, being of the spiritual natures, were capable of drawing this distinction with security.

They contradicted the *traditions* of the universal Church, by confronting with them those secret doctrines which they maintained had been imparted by Christ or



his apostles to a chosen few. To prove the existence of this mysterious instruction, they cited passages from St. Paul, in which he admonishes Timothy to preserve carefully that which had been entrusted to him. Basilides taught that they had been received from a certain man named Glaucius, whom St. Peter had employed as an interpreter; Valentinus derived them from Theodas, a disciple of St. Paul. Without a knowledge of these doctrines, said the Gnostics, it was impossible to understand the Scriptures. But with the Scriptures they acted with an universal and most licentious freedom. Some of the books of the New Testament were rejected; others were mutilated and corrupted; fictitious gospels and histories of the apostles were written. If some of the Gnostic sects admitted the whole or the greater part of the writings of the New Testament, they employed the most violent interpretations to bring into harmony with their doctrines, passages which evidently condemned them. This was the case particularly in the school of Valentinus, of whom Tertullian says, that greater destruction was wrought in the Scriptures by his forced explanations, than by the knife of Marcion.

The Gnostics looked down with contempt upon the Catholics, as men deeply below them in nature and in knowledge: in their idea, the Catholics were the enslaved and low order of physical men, to whom a blind faith had been prescribed; whilst they, the Gnostics, were the chosen generation, the perfect and the free,—gifted with knowledge, with which they could search into the most profound mysteries of the Deity,—men to whom heaven was promised, and which they should obtain without exertion. They therefore directed their most earnest efforts to gain proselytes amongst the Catholics, but laboured not at all, or but little, in the conversion of the heathens.

It would have been impossible to have formed a system of ecclesiastical order amongst the Gnostics, for they possessed no established, no uniform system of doctrine: the scholars continually changed and departed from the instructions of their masters, and each numerous sect

was thus broken into numberless smaller parties. They were, as all who have separated from the Church have been, more eager to ruin and to destroy, than to build or to preserve.\* Their laws, being only the works of men, possessed no principle of stability : their superiors knew not how to acquire authority ; and when necessity drove them to the expedient of forming at least an external constitution,—a species of hierarchy and ecclesiastical government,—soon did the weak edifice fall. But, as Tertullian remarks, we cannot, with propriety, say, that there ever existed schisms amongst them, for then we must suppose that they, for some time at least, possessed a bond of unity, and a fixed tenor of doctrine ; but we know that of these sects division and instability were the chief constituents.† The preparation of the catechumens, which was then observed with so much care in the Church, and the separation of them from the faithful, were not known amongst the Gnostics ; or if any distinction were drawn between the two classes, it was the distinction rather of the pagans, between their esoteric and exoteric religions, than of the Christian Church. Even women occupied public stations in their sacred ministry, and in some sects, as among the Marcosians, women presumed to administer baptism and the eucharist. “ Their ordinations,” says Tertullian, “ were ridiculous, and subject to perpetual change : to-day this man, to-morrow another, is a bishop : to-day he is a deacon, who to-morrow is a lector, and to-day he is a priest, who to-morrow is again a laic, for they sometimes grant the exercise of the priestly functions to the people.” Many of them had no particular Church, for their parties consisted of scattered companions in belief, and hence they frequently entered into communion with those who differed from them in faith. This social anarchy they denominated noble simplicity : the prudence of the Catholic ecclesiastical discipline, and the

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\* “ Ita fit, ut ruinas facilius operentur stantium ædificiorum, quam extructiones jacentium ruinarum.”—Tertull. de Præscript. c. 42.

† “ Et hoc est, quod schismata apud hæreticos fere non sunt : quia cum sint, non parent, Schisma est unitas ipse.”—Ibid.

harmony of its ecclesiastical government, they ridiculed as vain and frivolous. It appears, however, that the Marcionites had perpetual bishops and priests.

The Basilidians, and perhaps the majority of the Gnostic sects, celebrated as a day of solemn festival the 10th of January, in honour of the baptism of Jesus—the day which in their system formed the point on which the economy of our salvation turned ; as then the æon, Christ, descended and united himself with the man Jesus. The Gnostics must have viewed the sacraments in a light far different from that in which the Catholic Church beheld them, for as they denied the dignity of the human body, and of all matter, they considered all corporeal substance as the seat and incentive to evil, and would not therefore believe that God would select water and oil, bread and wine, to be the instruments of conveying his graces into the soul, as he would thereby have gone into a foreign kingdom, the kingdom of the Demiurgos, for the means of our sanctification. Some of the Gnostic sects, branches of the Valentinians, consequently rejected all the sacraments, even baptism. These men, the Quakers of antiquity, taught that the mysterious workings of the ineffable and invisible power of God could not be imparted to things transient and falling under the senses, and that perfect purification and redemption were found in the knowledge of divine things ; that all faults, sins, and corrupt inclinations of the heart of men, sprung from ignorance ; and that the gnosis, (or knowledge) was the regeneration of the inward man.\* Others of the Gnostics viewed baptism as an ordinance of the God of the Jews, and was to be rejected, as pure religion is spiritual and free from all sensible signs. The Marcionites differed from other Gnostic sects by administering to their proselytes a rite similar to Catholic baptism,—only however to those who had not entered into the state of matrimony, or who had resolved to live in celibacy : those who refused to comply with these conditions, continued as

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\* St. Irenæus, lib. i. 21, 4.



catechumens, and received this baptism only on their death-bed. In the time of St. Epiphanius, they administered a triple baptism, corresponding probably to the three degrees of initiation into their sacred mysteries. The Marcosians had two baptisms, the first of an inferior order, the physical; the second, the spiritual baptism, without which no one could hope to enter into the Pleroma. This spiritual baptism was performed with the greatest solemnity, as, by it the person baptized was supposed to be united with the more exalted half of his nature, the angel in the Pleroma: to this baptism, there succeeded an unction with odoriferous balsam. There remains no trace of evidence that children were baptized amongst the Gnostics.

The Eucharist was rejected by some of the sects and admitted by others, in forms more or less varying from the true doctrine of the Church. Some of the more ancient Gnostics, cotemporaries of St. Ignatius, expressed themselves on this dogma according to their principles of Dochetism, acknowledging that the Eucharist was the flesh of Jesus Christ, *which* suffered for our sins, and *which* the Father raised from the dead.\* Others, likewise Dochetists, not only preserved this mystery, but received it like the Church, as a sacrifice, and as a sacrament, containing the body and blood of Christ.† Marcus taught, that at the consecration the white wine in the chalice was changed into red wine, which was the blood of Charis. Tatian and his disciples, the Encratites and the Severians, as they forbade

\* Ignatii Ep. ad Smyrn. vii.

† It is in reference to this that St. Irenæus (iv. 18, 4) says of the Valentinians and Marcionites, "Quomodo constabit eis, eum panem in quo gratiæ actæ sunt, corpus esse Domini sui et calicem sanguinis ejus? —Ergo aut sententiam mutent, aut abstineant *offerendo* quæ prædicata sunt." Tertullian also testifies, adv. Marc. i. 14; v. 8, &c. that Marcion preserved the Eucharist. Dochetism did not prevent these Gnostics from admitting a sacrament of the body of Christ, for although they would not allow that he possessed a true human body, they believed that he possessed more than an empty shadow—a subtle, ethereal substance, which in appearance seemed a natural body: this substance could be given, they conceived, to the faithful in the Eucharist.

the use of wine, employed water as the matter of the Eucharist. The Ophites, or rather a branch of them, employed a most extraordinary manner of consecration. They caused the bread, that was destined for the Eucharist, to be first touched and licked by a serpent: it was then broken and distributed. This they called their perfect sacrifice (τελειαν θυσίαν). Still more revolting was the Eucharist of the Barborians or Barbelonites.

Among the Marcosians and Heracleonites we find a rite that corresponds to the sacrament of the anointing of the sick, or extreme unction. They poured water mingled with oil, or balsam and water, upon the head of the dying man, uttering at the same time a prayer, that in his passing to the Pleroma, he might not be impeded or detained by the Demiurgos or his spirits.

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## SECTION VI.

### MANICHEISM.\*

THE period during which Gnosticism stood in its vigour, did not extend beyond a century. Towards the middle of the third age, evident symptoms of dissolution began to manifest themselves; and if for a short

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\* Acta Disputationis Sti. Archelai Cascharorum in Mesopotamia Episcopi, cum Manete, (In Gallandii Biblioth. PP. tom. iii.); Epiphanius, Hæres. 66; Titi Bostrensis, lib. iv. contra Manicheos (In Canisii lec. Ant. ed. Basnage, tom. i.); Alexander Lycopolit. advers. Manch. placita (in Gallandii Bibliot. tom. iv.) The writings of St. Augustine against the Manichees, Faustus, Fortunatus, Adimantus, and Secundinus. His books, *Contra Epistolam Manichæi fundam*; *De actis cum Felice Manichæo*; *De natura boni*; *De duabus animabus*; *De utilitate credendi*; *De moribus Manichæorum*; *De Hæres.*—Evodius. *de Fide contra Manichæos*, collected in vol. viii. of the Benedictine edition of the works of St. Augustine.—Fragments of Letters of Manes in the works of St. Augustine and Evodius, and in Fabricii Bibliot. Græc. tom. v. p. 284 et seq.

Is. Beausobre, *Hist. Crit. de Manichée et du Manichéisme*; Amst. 1734, 39; 2 vols. 4to. Compare Laur. Alticotii, *S. J. Dissertat. de Mendaciis et Fraudibus J. Beausobrii*, in *Hist. Manich. Romæ*, 1764, 4 to.; Ejusdem, *Diss. Hist. Crit. de Antiquis Novisq. Manichæis*; Romæ, 1763-4;

time the Gnostic deformation of Christianity had seemed to threaten a triumph, it served only to display more clearly the victorious power of the Church. But the magic charm which Gnosticism had thrown over the minds of men was not easily broken : this was shown by the rapid and wide progress of another and cognate sect—Manicheism. Again, the genius of the Eastern religion of nature collected all its might, and endeavoured to direct Christianity into a course that would have conducted it back to the ancient paganism : again was the human soul pantheistically identified with the Deity, and both were reduced to the level of nature : again were ethical relations in nature restored, and in the place of the Christian doctrine of redemption, there was substituted a tissue of speculations drawn from natural philosophy and fables. This new system was indeed more luxuriantly adorned with fable than most of the Gnostic sects : but as in these, so in Manicheism, these mythical forms were more than veils beneath which abstract dogmas were concealed : an objective value was given to them, and in this consisted the vocation and pre-eminence of Manes, to cast aside figures and allegories, and to teach the pure and simple truth.

Of Manes, the author of this heresy, we possess Oriental (modern indeed) and Greek records. In many particular points, however, they vary from each other. Of these different accounts, that upon which we can most depend is the following :—Manes was by birth a Persian, and founded a system of religion differing from the religion of his country.\* When he became

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F. Chr. Baur, *Das Manichäische Religionsystem, nach den Quellen untersucht und entwickelt* ; Tubing. 1831 (Religious System of the Manichees examined and developed from its Source) ; F. Treschel, *Über den Kanon, die Kritik und Exegese der Manichäer* ; Bern. 1832. (On the Canon, Criticism and Exegesis of the Manichees.)

\* According to the Greek accounts, the immediate author of the new doctrines was not Manes, but Scythianus, a Saracen merchant, who in his distant journeys became acquainted with the Oriental and Greek philosophies. His heir and disciple was Terebinthus, who named himself Buddha, and boasted that he had been born of a virgin. The widow of Terebinthus appointed, as her heir, her slave Cubricus,



acquainted with Christianity, he infused many ideas borrowed from it into his own system, that he might make it more acceptable to the Christians. These innovations in religion drew upon him a persecution in his native land, and he, therefore, retired to countries more to the east, to Hindostan, Turkestan, and Rhatai, the north of China. He returned to Persia; and, either on account of his apostacy from the religion of Zoroaster, or, as the Greek historians relate, on account of the death of the son of Batiram the schach, whom he had undertaken to restore from illness, he was executed by command of the schach, in 277, and his head was suspended over the gate of the city Dschondischapur.

The Manichean system bears with it an appearance so wonderful,—being evidently related to Gnosticism, yet differing from it in many respects,—that at once the question arises, from what source has its author drawn, and what were the religious elements which he has mingled together?\*

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and he, having assumed the name of Manes, became possessed of the books of Seythianus, and from them formed his system.

\* The opinions respecting the sources of Manicheism are as many and as different as those which regard the origin of Gnosticism. It has been generally thought that a mixture of the doctrines of Zend, and of Christianity, formed the essence of Manicheism. Abulfaradsch, who flourished in the 13th century, relates that Manes passed from the Zoroastrian to the Christian religion, and was ordained a priest of the Church of Choaz, the capital of the Persian province Huzitis. The Fathers of the Church maintain, on the contrary, that Manes never was a Christian, and that it was only after he had sent forth his disciples to announce his doctrines, that he became acquainted with Christianity, and that then, after he had capriciously chosen some parts of the New Testament, he, for the first time, mixed Christian truths with his own errors, to recommend them to the Christians. In fact, Manicheism has nothing in it that is peculiarly Christian: the Christ of Manes has nothing in common with the true Jesus Christ, beyond the name, which Manes himself confessed is applied improperly (*κατὰ χρηστικόν*), and only by accommodation. Baur, in his *Manichean Religious System*, p. 433, contends that Manicheism was intimately connected with Buddhism; and long before him, Aug. Ant. Georgi, in his *Alphabetum Tibetanum*, (Romæ, 1762,) p. 398, held the same opinion; and, moreover, that Manes was revered, by his Oriental followers, as a new Incarnation of Buddha. V. Kölln (*Allg. Lit. Zeitung*, 1832, p. 440) thinks that Manicheism might have arisen from the unobserved confluence of the Neoplatonic philosophy, and the Median-Persian doc-

It is incontestable that several of the principal dogmas of the Zoroastrian religion, in which Manes was nurtured, formed the foundation of his system. Among these dogmas, we may enumerate the dualism of light and darkness, in the opposition of the good God, Ormuzd, and the evil principle, Ahriman; the invasion by the latter of the kingdom of Ormuzd; the existence of a world of pure light, which preceded the creation of the earth; Mithras, a genius of the sun, corresponding to the Manichean Christ; the mixture, and the antithesis of good and of evil, the former the works of Ormuzd, and the latter of Ahriman, which pervade all creation. But, notwithstanding this uniformity in some points, the Manichean and Zend doctrines are essentially different: even the Manichean dualism is not the same as the Persian, for in this, matter is the radical evil which is opposed to the Deity; in the former, there is only a mingling of the pure and good creation of Ormuzd with the evil work of Ahriman. The Manichean metempsychosis contradicts also the Zend doctrine, which admitted rather a resurrection of the body, as does also the Manichean practice of abstaining from flesh-meat, and of forbidding matrimony. Many other articles, upon which Manicheism departed from the Zend doctrines, may be found in the Buddhaist religion, which, at the time of Manes, had existed at least eight hundred years, and then prevailed over the greater part of Eastern Asia. Buddhism considered the origin of all visible things as the source of all evil; it viewed the life of man as a time of penance and of purification; it placed his beatitude in his deliverance from whatever is material and sensual, and in the mortification of his passions and desires. The Manichean Christ occupies the same place as Buddha. Dohetism was taught of both, and in

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trines. But, not to mention the essential contradictions contained in the two systems, we may observe that chronology prevents us from admitting this syncretism, for when Manes raised his system, the Neoplatonic philosophy was only in its formation. Plotinus taught from 250 to 260, and was therefore contemporary with Manes; and we cannot suppose that his doctrines could have so rapidly spread themselves to a region so distant as Persia.

the doctrines of both religions, it was predicted that the course of this world should cease when the spiritual should have divested itself of the material. Manes, moreover, had long sojourned in those countries where Buddhism reigned, and still continues to reign. A Buddhas was said to have been his predecessor; and the later Manicheans taught, that Zoroaster, Buddhas, Christ, and Manes, were one and the same person, who had appeared on earth at different times for the salvation of men. Hence it will appear at least probable, that in Manicheism there were amalgamated Buddhaist and Zoroastrian elements. But it is not difficult to point out a third source of these doctrines—the gnosis of Basilides,—who, according to the account of Archelaus,\* taught in Persia, and in whose system are found the Manichean dogmas of the desires of the powers of darkness to ascend into the region of light; of the commixture of light with the hyle; of the efforts of those souls that are bound down in the hyle to obtain their liberation and their return into the happy region of light; of the creation of the world, springing from this mingling of light and darkness; of the existence of this world only as a process of purification of the imprisoned souls. The following review of the Manichean doctrines will present us with a proof, that its substance may be found in the Zoroastrian, Buddhaist, and Basilidian systems, and that Manes did no more than to unite them, reduce them into form, to define more accurately the absolute dualism and its consequences, and to clothe the whole with a garb of mythical poetry.

The fundamental doctrine of the Manichean system is the dualism, which arose from the question—what is the origin of evil? Two independent beings, the rulers of two eternal and conflicting kingdoms, stand opposed to each other. This harsh dualism was from the beginning in some degree softened, by the concession of a superiority of the good over the evil kingdom: for the Manicheans wished not to give to the evil principle the

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\* Acta Disputat. Archel. c. 55. Rout. iv. 275.



appellation of God. The good principle, God the Father, is purely and essentially spiritual, light uncreated: in his kingdom, which is above the earth of light, he is surrounded by princely and blessed æones. This kingdom, the earth of light, and the æones, are one and the same substance with God. The wicked principle, Satan, the hyle, accompanied by spirits or demons, like to himself, rules in his kingdom of darkness, which is placed upon this earth of malediction. His realm consists of the five regions, of night, tempest, fire, smoke, and mire: every one of these regions has its animal and demon inhabitants, and in the highest the Archon holds his throne. The kingdom of light rises high above the kingdom of darkness, which, like a split cone, presses only at one point upon the immeasurable circumference of the earth of light. The kingdom of the hyle is filled with an ever-increasing material, life; but there pervades throughout an endless and destructive warfare,—a wild and furious discord. In this warfare, the powers of darkness arrived at the extreme boundaries of their region, and beheld, in all its splendour, the light to them before unknown; and incited by restless desire they resolved to make it their own. To guard the threatened barriers of his kingdom, and to repel the attacks of the hyle, the God of light caused the soul of the world, the mother of life, to emanate from his own essence. Identical with this, or emanating from it, was the first man, who as guardian of the kingdom of light, and aided by the five pure elements, opposed to the five impure elements of the hyle, commenced the strife.

But the hyle could be overcome only by being mingled with the light, and, therefore, the æon of the kingdom of light was compelled partly to yield in the combat, thereby to prepare the way for a complete victory over the Archon and his powers. These powers of darkness were allured by the splendour of the elements around them, and thence followed an intercourse of powers hitherto placed in direct opposition. The hyle, subdued and tempered by the pervading influence of the first man, became capable of organic form and order,

and then followed the creation of the world by the "living spirit," (*spiritus potens*), a power emanating from the God of light, and sent by him as an auxiliary to the first man, when distressed in the strife with the Archon. This Demiurgos of the Manicheans (ζων πνευμα) formed this visible world by mingling together the limbs of the first man, the soul of the universe, and the bodies of the defeated powers of darkness, and assigned to each part its place according to the different degrees of mixture. Of the purer parts, that had not been affected by the coalition, he formed the sun and the moon; of the less pure, the other stars; and of those portions of light which had become gross from the abundance of matter through which they had been diffused, he formed the creatures of earthly natures. All things, through the various gradations in the kingdom of nature, even stones, possess particles of the divine life within them; and this is made manifest, as the Son of God, (*Jesus patibilis*), who, being bound down by the band of matter, sighs in torment for his liberation, is born in every tree that springs from the earth, and when it decays is crucified on its trunk. The present perishable world was not called into being by a free act of the Divine will: its existence is only a necessary consequence of the conjunction of the two principles: the Godhead itself, being united to impure matter, suffers in one part of its essence; and that it may not behold this corruption, conceals this part of itself, as if by a veil, from its own view. The end, therefore, and the object of this world, are only to effect a deliverance from this mixture,—a liberation of the souls of light from the prison of this material body, from the dominion of the evil principle, to which they are subjected, as clay in the hand of the potter, and to complete the perfect restoration of primeval liberty and purity.

That the imprisoned souls of light might be concentrated, and thus be more easily confined, the Archon prevailed on the demons, his companions, to deliver to him those particles of light which they had seized: these he invested with substance, from which sprung mankind.

Man thus created was formed according to the image of the Archon and the first man. His corporeal nature is from the hyle, and is, therefore, of the nature of demons: his spirit is a reflexion of that substance of pure light, of the first man, which dwells in the sun, a portion of the universal soul. Thus does man, a representation of the first man, and of the Archon, reflect in his twofold nature the entire world, composed of good and evil, of light and darkness, of spirit and matter. He is the point upon which all the powers of this visible world are united. He consists, therefore, of two natures, and in some sense of two souls,—of the wicked material nature, which is improperly called soul, and of the good spirit which descends from the kingdom of light.

This soul of light in man, possesses a knowledge of its sublime origin and nature, by the power of which it resists and overcomes the wicked desires of the baser, material substance: but should it suffer this knowledge to be darkened, it yields in its opposition to the evil, and to evil-inciting, nature. Hence comes sin, which holds its reign in a material excitement which exists in the body. Sin, therefore, is not a free act of the whole man, an entire consent to evil, but only a passive relation of the good nature, which has been overcome. As soon as the soul experiences sorrow and shame for its infirmity, it may obtain the remission of its offence: for as evil must always remain a stranger to the soul, evil cannot be the work of the soul, but of another nature to which it is bound down in companionship, and with which it is united as a partner in evil, only when it does not effectually resist: its natural repugnance to evil is, therefore, sufficient to dissolve this fellowship, and to expiate every sin.

The Manichees admitted a doctrine which in form approached near to the Christian faith of the Trinity. According to their belief, the Father dwells in high, impenetrable light: his son, Christ, reigns in power in the sun, and in wisdom in the moon, and the Holy Ghost dwells in the air which encompasses the earth. From



his abode there he produces his fructifying effects upon the earth, that the *Jesus patibilis* may liberate the substances of light which are confined in trees and plants, and which agonize in their struggles for liberty. The Redeemer imagined by the Manichees, is the Christ who resides in the sun and moon, the pure soul of light uncorrupted by matter, the son of the first man. Under his guidance, and by his means, the process of the purification of the imprisoned souls advances. From his abode in the sun, he sought to draw to himself all the elements of light that were scattered through the world: those that were confined in the lower organic and unorganic nature, strove in unconscious agitation; and those that were enclosed in human bodies, endeavoured in ardent desire to gain their freedom. But this desire existed only in those men to whom was known their high origin of light. To infuse into them this knowledge, the son of eternal light descended from his throne in the sun to this lower earth. But he was not born as man: he, the Redeemer, could not be confined within a human body: he was surrounded by a body only of appearance: the divinity in him was not united to the humanity; and on one occasion, in his manifestation on the mountain, he displayed his true bodiless nature of light. His office was that of a teacher: he taught the souls of men, how, by violence, they were to liberate themselves from the bonds of matter, that thus they might fly up again to the heavenly land of their origin. His passion and death on the cross were no more than a delusion, as had been his whole life on the earth. They served, however, as symbolical representations of the manner in which the soul of light is bound and held in captivity by the hyle, and of the manner also in which it is freed from its bondage.

Manes acknowledged the Paraclete, or perfecter of the true religion that had been promised by Christ. The object of his mission was partly to reveal the true religion, and partly to purify that which had been before revealed, from error, and again to establish it in its primitive form. After the Paraclete, no other teacher sent

by God should appear. He rejected Judaism as the work of the Archon, who had manifested himself to Moses and the Prophets, but had instructed them only in error; consequently, there can be in the Old Testament no prophecies regarding the Redeemer. The Manicheans confessed that the New Testament had contained Divine revelations; but as their system could not, even by a forced interpretation, be made to harmonize with its contents, they contended that in some parts it had been interpolated, and in others falsified, by Judaizing Christians.

As all those who professed the doctrines of Manes, could not or would not subject themselves to all that was required of them, the sect was divided into the classes of the *hearers* and of the *elect*. The hearers were permitted to live in matrimony, to eat flesh, (but not to slay the animals), to possess wealth, to practise agriculture and commerce, and to bear magistracies. The elect, or the perfect, who were exclusively the priests, avoided every distracting connexion with the world and its goods: they led a life of Manichean purity, as far as it was possible without perishing from hunger, unmarried, without labour or possessions, free from all occupation of the senses, with the exception of music, employed only in the purification of their nature of light; and as they could not, without sin, cut or collect the vegetables that were necessary for their sustenance, they were abundantly supplied with them by the *hearers*, to whom they imparted in return pardon of the sins that had been committed in plucking and preparing the fruits. These elect were venerated as beings of a nature more sublime than other men; they conferred their blessing by the imposition of hands: they were employed not only in purifying their own souls, but also in liberating those that were enclosed within plants and fruits; for by eating fruits and plants, they collected these souls within themselves, and by their own continency and purity secured to them a return to the realms of light. At their death, their souls were raised, without a further delay upon the earth, to the sun, and thence to the

kingdom of light : the souls of the *hearers*, on the contrary, not being yet ripe for this exaltation, were doomed to enter first into the soul of an *elect*, or to pass into a plant or tree.

The Manichees had an external worship for the hearers, and another, internal, for the elect : the former consisted of prayers, and reading the epistle of their founder. They boasted that their worship of God was without temples, altars, sacrifices, incense and statues, free from all pagan and Jewish pomp : they considered the Catholics as no more than half Christians, as they had admitted of Heathen and Jewish abuses. The religious actions and usages of the elect were hidden in the deepest secrecy, and well might they thus be concealed ; for if the crimes there perpetrated had met the public eye, they would have called down the severest punishment of the civil power.

Whether a baptism were administered to those who entered the class of an elect, or whether it were conferred in oil, as Turibius, bishop of Astorga, asserts, is uncertain : this, however, we know, that the Manichees despised the Christian baptism of water as of no value. To the sun and the moon, or to the Christ reigning in these luminaries, they offered Divine honours. They began the Monday with fasting. Their most solemn festival was celebrated in March, in honour of the martyrdom of their founder : it was called Bema (*βημα*), the festival of the seat of doctrine. In the centre of their place of assembly stood a richly ornamented throne, which was approached by five steps. These represented the five degrees of the Manichean hierarchy,—the twelve masters, with their chief ; the seventy-two bishops ; the priests, the deacons, and the body of the elect. Upon the throne itself, no one dared to sit, as a sign that no one had yet been, and never should be, found worthy to fill the place of their first and greatest teacher, Manes.

The Manichees spread themselves, with wonderful rapidity, during the third century, through the Roman empire, in places where Gnosticism had prepared a path before them : but in 296, Diocletian published a most



severe edict against them. As they were a dangerous sect, originating in Persia which was hostile to him, he feared that they might introduce into his empire the abominable practices of their native land. He therefore condemned their chiefs to suffer death by fire, the members of the sect to be decapitated. The more wealthy were deprived of their goods, and doomed to labour in the mines.

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## SECTION VII.

THE ANTITRINITARIANS : THEODOTUS AND ARTEMON :  
 PRAXEAS : NOETUS : SABELLIUS : PAUL OF SAMO-  
 SETA : CATHOLIC CONFUTATIONS : DIONYSIUS OF  
 ALEXANDRIA, AND DIONYSIUS OF ROME : THE SY-  
 NODS OF ANTIOCH.\*

THE doctrine of the Trinity, of three persons in one God, is, in conjunction with the dogma of the incarnation, with which it is most intimately connected, the foundation of the Christian religion. This Divine Trinity,—or the doctrine that the Deity manifests himself in the most perfect manner, and produces, by this manifestation, a representation in essence and nature like to itself, its word or light, its intelligence or wisdom, which is the SON; and that the union of ineffable love which unites these two Divine hypostases, as the source and principle of their felicity, is also a Divine hypostasis, the HOLY GHOST—this doctrine can never be comprehended by the finite understanding of man, which can never penetrate into the essence of the infinite Godhead.

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\* Euseb. Hist. Eccles. v. 28 ; vi. 20, 33 ; vii. 27-30 ; Theodoret. Hær. Fab. ii. 4, 5, 8, 9 ; Epiphan. Hær. 54, 62, 65 ; Tertullianus adv. Praxeam ; S. Hippolytus, contra Hær. Noeti, opp. ex edit. Fabricii, Hamburg, 1716, vol. ii. p. 5, seqq. ; Concilium Antiochenum, in causa Pauli Samos. apud Routh, vol. ii. p. 465, seqq. ; C. Wormii, Historia Sabelliana, Fref. et Lips. 1696. ; J. G. Feuerlin, De Hæres. Paul. Samos. Gotting. 1741, 4to. : J. G. Ehrlich, De Erroribus Pauli Samos. Lips. 1745, 4to.

Man must therefore always believe it as a most profound mystery ; but it is proposed as an object to the enquiring mind, that holding fast the dogma by faith, and directing ourselves by it, we may arrive at that degree of knowledge of things Divine, which is possible to our limited nature. It was not until after some conflict that the Church exercised her full authority, as guardian of the ancient faith in all its integrity, whose duty it is to repress all error, and all principles that may lead to error, among Christians. By this conflict, the Church was necessitated amply to unfold the truth of her doctrine, which was at first more involved, and although perfectly understood, not fully expressed ; to define it more particularly, and in distinct formulas, against every arising error. This is a service which heresies have at all times conferred upon the Church. In the early ages of Christianity, the Jewish dread of everything that appeared repugnant to their idea of the unity of God, taught many to take offence at the doctrine of the Trinity ; and not only the Judaizing Christians, such as the Ebionites, but many also of the converts from paganism, who could not think without horror of their ancient errors, or of the possibility of again falling into them, might easily stray from the truth in the dogma of the threefold personality of God, representing it to themselves, as if the unity of God were thereby divided. In two ways this article of our faith was contested. Some, impelled by a spirit destructive of Christianity, denied the Divine nature of the Redeemer, and consequently the efficacy of the redemption, and considered Jesus Christ as no more than a man of sublime virtue. Against these, the Church was compelled to defend the Divinity of Christ, as she had defended his human nature against the doctetical principles of the Gnostics. Others, on the contrary, taught an union of the Deity with the man Jesus ; but as they admitted not the distinction of the three Divine persons,—asserting that the names, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, were only attributes of the one God,—they supposed that God, the Word that united himself with Jesus, was this one God, or the Father. They were thence named Patripassionists.

The first leaders of the Antitrinitarians, were Theodotus of Byzantium and Artemon, who lived towards the close of the second century. The former, a dresser of leather by trade, but a man not without learning, had renounced his faith in Christ during the persecution, and to defend himself from the accusations that were made against him, he asserted that he whom he had denied was no more than man. From Byzantium he went to Rome, where he was excommunicated by pope Victor. His doctrine that Christ was a mere man, and although miraculously born of a virgin, was distinguished from other men only by his greater virtue, gained for him followers, who formed themselves into an heretical sect. By the promise of a monthly pay, they persuaded a confessor, named Natalis, to become their bishop; but being terrified by a nightly vision, this deluded man threw himself at the feet of Zephyrinus, the successor of Victor, and, after reiterated prayer, was again received into the communion of the Church. Doctrines similar to those of Theodotus were taught by the otherwise unknown Artemon. According to Novatian, the disciples of this heretic maintained these propositions: If the Father be different from the Son, and the Son different from the Father, and both be equally God, it would follow, that there would be not only one God, but two Gods. Now, there is but one God; therefore, Christ is not God, but only man. To prove their doctrines, they quoted those passages of the Scriptures, in which Jesus calls himself man, or is spoken of as man. But the Theodotians presumed to corrupt, either by subtraction, or by alteration, those parts of the sacred writings by which their errors might be refuted. A scholar of the first Theodotus, was Theodotus the money-changer. He lived at Rome, in the time of pope Zephyrinus, and taught that Melchisedech was superior to Christ, as Christ was only man, and the royal priest a manifestation of God; he was the mediator and intercessor for angels, as Christ was for men. His followers were named Melchisedechites, and offered oblations in the name of Melchisedech.



Of the opposite sect of the Unitarians, Praxeas is the first that is known to us. He went from Asia, where he had suffered imprisonment for the Christian faith, and had been honoured as a confessor, to Rome, in the pontificate of Victor ; and in that city, and afterwards at Carthage, advanced his erroneous doctrines. He taught that there is only one Divine person, that the Divine Word, the Logos, and the Holy Ghost, were not distinct substances ; for if that were admitted, it would follow that there were three Gods. It ought rather to be said, that God or the Father had united himself with Jesus, having gone out from himself, and was then called the Son (*ipse se sibi Filium fecit*) ; he was named Holy Ghost, for God is essentially a pure spirit. This was the argument employed by Praxeas : as Christ was God, and, as according to the Scripture, there is only one God, Christ was therefore the Father, whose Deity resided in the man Jesus. This, he thought, he could prove from those words of Jesus, “I and the Father are one,—he that seeth me, seeth also the Father.” His adversary, Tertullian, proposed to him this assertion as the consequence of his doctrine : “The Father was born and suffered.” But Praxeas seems not to have assented to this ; he would only say, “the Father suffered with the Son.” (*Compassus est Pater Filio.*)

The same idea of the Trinity was formed by Noetus, who had been excommunicated by the clergy of Smyrna about the year 220. He spoke, however, more decidedly the language of the Patripassionists. “There is,” he said, “but one God and Father, who is concealed when he wills, and when he wills is revealed to man : he is unborn from eternity, and born when he took flesh of the virgin : he is impassible and immortal at one time, at another capable of suffering and death.” As a foundation to his doctrine, he employed these words of St. Paul : “Of whom is Christ, according to the flesh, who is over all things, God blessed for ever.” (Rom. ix. 5). “If Christ be God, blessed from eternity, he is,” said Noetus, “undeniably the one undivisible God, who is named the Father, and who resided in Christ.”

Somewhat different from this appears to have been the error of Beryllus, bishop of Bostra, in Arabia. According to him, the Logos is no more than a simple power,—a transient emanation of the essence of God. Before its union with Christ, it had no personality ; but by this union, when this power imparted itself as a soul to a human body, the *person* was formed. In this doctrine two errors were blended together—the denial of the eternal distinction of persons between the Father and the Son, and the heresy, afterwards defended by Apollinaris, that the Divinity supplied the place of a human soul in Jesus Christ. At a synod held to condemn these errors, in 244, Origen so triumphantly refuted them, that Beryllus, of his own will, renounced them ; and by letters addressed to the great Alexandrian doctor, acknowledged to him his sincerest gratitude.

Greater troubles were excited in the Church, about the year 255, by Sabellius, in the Pentapolis in Africa. In the formation of his system, he employed the apocryphal (but which was considered by him the genuine) gospel of the Egyptians, in which Christ reveals to his disciples, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are all one and the same. Sabellius, like his predecessors, proceeded with the idea, that the distinction of persons or hypostases in God, would lead to the belief of a plurality of Gods, and his disciples were wont to enquire of those whom they wished to win over to their party, “ Have we one God, or have we three Gods ? ” His doctrine was the following. In the beginning, God was the hidden, formless, unrevealed Monas, who afterwards manifested himself in a Trinity. For when God, revealing himself externally by the work of creation, came from his hidden primeval state, and entered into a relation with the world as its ruler and preserver, he was named the Father : when to effect the redemption of mankind, a second emanation from the Deity (immediately from the Father) went forth, it united itself in power and might (ἐνεργεια μονη, οὐχι δε οὐσιας υποστασει) to the man Christ, who had been formed by the Father in the womb of the virgin : in this union, and on account

of the same, he was called the Son. Lastly, a third power proceeded from God, working in the body of the faithful, the Church, enlightening, regenerating them, and perfecting their redemption: this power was named the Holy Ghost. Sabellius, it will therefore be seen, admitted a distinction between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, but not a distinction of persons, nor extending to eternity: his is no other than a distinction of three names, of three appellations of one and the same God, in the threefold relation of Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. The Redeemer is, indeed, different from the Creator, another *appearance* (*προσωπον*); not another hypostasis or person, only another power, another representation, another emanation from the Godhead, which, however, does not continue in its individuality, but, like the emanation named the Holy Ghost, returns, after the completion of its office, to the Father, from whom it had proceeded, as a ray shot forth from the sun may be attracted back, and again received into it. It is only an expansion, occurring in time, and transitory, of the Father in the Son and in the Holy Ghost. Sabellius compared his Trinity to the union of the body, of the soul and of the mind in one person; to the sun, in which, in one substance, there are three distinct properties—the powers of heating, the power of enlightening, and its circumference; and, lastly, to the distinction of graces which flow from one spirit. This Trinity is, therefore, not *immanent*, as is the Trinity of the Catholic Church, but *emanent*, consisting only of external relations of God with the world and with the Church. Sabellius fell into error by confounding the interior with the exterior,—the eternal with the temporal manifestation of God.

Removed still farther from the truth, and similar in some respects to the errors of Artemon, was the doctrine of Paul of Samoseta, bishop of Antioch. He taught that the Redeemer of the world was a pure man, who, on account of his miraculous birth, which was effected by the immediate power of God, and of the infusion of divine wisdom into his soul, was named the Son of God.



In him resided, and through him operated, this divine wisdom, the Logos, the same that had inspired the holy men of the old law, but which was imparted in a higher degree and more abundantly to Christ. As in God there is no distinction of persons, this Logos was not a person, nor united in one person to Christ: it was the intelligence, the wisdom of God which revealed itself to men, which taught and worked miracles through Christ, and then departed from this man, whom it had employed as an instrument. The sufferings and ordinary human actions of Christ could not, therefore, be transferred to the Divinity, which could take no part in them.

Paul of Samoseta attacked the very fundamental doctrines of Christianity—the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Redemption, and as unchristian as his doctrine were his manners. He was the chief of the collectors of taxes in the service of queen Zenobia, who ruled over Syria, and he gloried in this title more than in that of a bishop: by his avarice, his cruelty, and his ostentation, he disgraced his sacred dignity; he caused the hymns that were sung in honour of the Redeemer of the world, in the Church, to be disused, and replaced them by others, which, even on the solemn feast of Easter, were sung to celebrate his own praises: flatterers were hired to proclaim him an angel sent from heaven. As Paul possessed one of the principal and most ancient sees of the Church, and as he was not deficient in talents to extend and to confirm his errors, the danger to be dreaded was the greater, and threw nearly the whole eastern Church into commotion. From the year 264 to 270, three synods were held at Antioch, in which the chief bishops of Syria, Palestine, and Asia Minor, were assembled. At first Paul partly acknowledged his errors, and promised to remain for the future faithful to the orthodox faith, but it was not before the third synod, in the year 269 or 270, that he was compelled, by the learned priest Malchion, fully to acknowledge his heresy: he was then deposed and excommunicated. As, however, he endeavoured to exclude from the episcopal residence Domnus, who had been elected to succeed

him, the bishops of the synod appealed to the emperor Aurelian, who answered, that the Church and the episcopal residence should be ceded to him who had been acknowledged by the bishop of Rome, and the other bishops of Italy : this was Domnus. For some time after the synod, the condemned doctrines were professed by many, who were known by the name of Paulianists or Samosetists. The council of Nice, in its nineteenth canon, ordained, that all Paulianists, who might return to the Catholic Church, should be rebaptized ; whence it has been concluded, that these heretics did not baptize in the name of the three Divine persons.

In the early part of the third century, an unknown author confuted the errors of Artemon : fragments of his work have been preserved by Eusebius, who, on the authority of Photius, ascribes it to Caius, a priest of Rome.\* The Artemonites defended their errors by their pretended antiquity and apostolicity. Their doctrines, they maintained, had been universal down to the time of pope Victor : his successor, Zephyrinus, corrupted the truth, and introduced the modern doctrine of the Divinity of Christ. Caius, or whoever was the author of the work against these heretics, appealed to the writings of Justin, Miltiades, Tatian, Clement, Irenæus, Melito, and many others, in all of which Christ is spoken of as God (*θεολογεται*) ; and to the hymns and canticles, which from the beginning of the Church had been composed by faithful brethren, which proclaim Christ as the Logos of God, and celebrate his Divine nature. With regard to pope Victor, he declares, that he had excommunicated Theodotus, the first of their false teachers ; he could not, therefore, have participated in his heresy.

Against the Unitarian Praxeas, Tertullian wrote a distinct work, in which he exposes the futility of the charge that idolatry would flow from the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity. He proves that the monarchy, the

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\* The book quoted by Eusebius is the "*συμρκος λαβυρινθος*," which Theodoret cites with the remark, that it is not a work of Origen, as many had supposed. Photius ascribes it to Caius.

unity of substance, can well subsist with the threefold personality of God. "There are three," he says, "who are distinct,—not in existence but in order, not in essence but in person, not in power but in propriety; there is one existence, one essence, one power. The Son is born of the Father, but is not separated from him. The Father produced the Son, as the root produces the tree, as the fountain produces the stream, and as the sun produces the ray; but the tree is not separated from the root, as the river is not from the fountain, nor the ray of light from the sun, as the Word is not separated from God. But where there is a second there must be two, where a third three. The Holy Ghost is the third, as from the root and the tree the fruit is third, the channel from the fountain and the stream, and from the sun and the ray the point whence the ray departs." In the same manner Hippolytus defended the Catholic doctrine against Noetus. He employs similar figures to explain the relation of the Father with the Son,—of light by which another body is illumined, of the ray flowing from the sun, and of water from the fountain. It is worthy of remark, that the disciples of Noetus and Sabellius employed the universal belief of the Divinity of Christ as a proof of their doctrine. For thus, according to Hippolytus, they explained themselves: "If I say that Christ is God, he must be the Father, for as God is one, and as Christ, that is God, himself suffered, consequently the Father suffered." To justify himself, Noetus maintained, that he thus glorified Christ, an act in which there could be no evil.\*

In refuting these heresies, the Catholic fathers were careful to avoid the appearance of an approach to the opposite (the Arian) errors. Thus Tertullian endea-

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\* "Usque adeo hunc manifestum est in Scripturis esse Deum tradi, ut plerique hæreticorum divinitatis ipsius magnitudine commoti, ultra modum extendentes honores ejus, ausi sunt non Filium sed Deum Patrem promovere vel putare: quod etsi contra veritatem Scripturarum est tamen divinitatis Christi argumentum grande et perspicuum est. Qui usque adeo Deus, sed qua Filius Dei natus ex Deo, ut plerique illum, ut diximus, hæretici ita Deum acceperint ut non Filium sed Patrem pronunciandum putarent."—Novatian. De Trinit. cap. xviii.



voured to obviate all misunderstanding, when he distinguishes the Son from the Father, that it might not be supposed that he divided and separated the one from the other, or that instead of three persons he admitted three distinct substances. He therefore expressly asserted, "The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are not separate from each other;" for if he had said, the Father is one, the Son another, and the Holy Ghost another, simple or evil-minded men might have so understood him, as if he had taught that the three Divine persons were divided and distinct in essence.\*

How difficult it was to refute Sabellianism without offending against the consubstantiality of the Divine persons, especially in an age when the language of theology had not been conventionally determined, but was only in its formation, was shown by Dionysius of Alexandria. In an epistle to Ammon and Euphranor, he had strongly defended the distinction of persons in the Father and the Son. Among several irreprehensible similitudes, he employed these, that were not suitable,—that the Son is different from the Father as the vine is from the husbandman, or as the ship is from its architect. As he also adopted an equivocal expression, calling the Son a *creature* (ποίημα) of the Father, this expression, together with the above similitudes, seemed to contain a sense which placed the Son in the class of beings created, and which destroyed his consubstantiality with the Father. Complaints were therefore laid against him, about the year 262, before the Roman pontiff, who also was named Dionysius. The pope called a synod at Rome, and, in a dogmatical letter, required of the bishop of Alexandria, that he should state precisely his belief on this point. He declared, that the Catholic faith lay between the errors of those who so divided the three persons as to form three substances or three Godheads,

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\* Thus St. Justin (Dialog. cum Tryphone, num. 128), after he has shown that the Son is distinct from the Father in number, and born of him, adds, "Αλλ' οὐ κατ' αποτομην ὡς απομεριζομένης της του πατρος οὐσίας, ὅποια τα ἄλλα μεριζόμενα και τεμνομενα ὄν τα αὐτα ἔστιν, ἀ και πριν τμηθηναι."

and those who confounded them so as to make only one person. He further declared, that the Son could not be called a creature (*ποιημα*), as if he were of the number of created things: he was born, not made: for had he been made, or created, there would have been a time in which the Father was without the Word, the Logos,—an error which must be repudiated.\*

Dionysius of Alexandria lost no time in defending himself. He wrote immediately to the pope, and in his letter, and in an apology in four books published soon after, he fully made known his faith in the Holy Trinity, and proved it to be in perfect accordance with the faith of the Catholic Church. He said, that he had now cast away the similitudes of the vine and the ship, which, indeed, might have been explained by the context, and had in their place substituted others, of the plant springing from the root, and of the stream flowing from the fountain. His explanation of the Divine economy, or of the relation between the Father and the Son, is in substance the following:—The Son has his being from the Father, but is eternal with him, as the splendour of eternal light, as the brilliancy of the sun, is inseparable from it, and simultaneous with it. There never was a period in which God was not Father. The Son is, therefore, not a creature, except in his human nature; he is the Son of God, not by adoption, but by nature, and as the Father and the Son are indivisible from each other, so the Holy Ghost is inseparable from the Father and the Son. “Thus do we extend the unity into the trinity, and confine the trinity undiminished within the unity.”† Dionysius remarks that he had not used the word *consubstantial*, (*ὁμοουσιος*) as it was nowhere found in the Scripture, but that he had always pro-

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\* “Εἰ τοινοῦν γεγονεν ὁ υἱος, ἦν ὅτε οὐκ ἦν ταῦτα ἦν ἄρα καιρος οτε χωρις τούτων ἦν ὁ θεος. Ἀποπρωτατον δε τουτο.”—Dionysii Papæ Epist. In “Pontiff. Rom. Epistolæ coll. a Constantio,” Gotting. 1796, p. 194.

† “Οὐτω μεν ἡμεῖς τε την τριαδα την μοναδα πλατυνομεν ἀδιαίρετως, και την τριαδα παλιν ἀμειωτον εἰς την μοναδα συγκεφαλαιουμεθα.”—Dionys. apud Athanas. de Sent. Dionysii, n. 14.

fessed the doctrine contained in that word, and had by many arguments, as by the example of human generation, proved that the Son was one substance with the Father.

This word, which was soon after solemnly adopted by the Church, as most expressive of its faith, had been used by Dionysius of Rome, and the Roman synod. We hear, nevertheless, that this same word was rejected by the council of Antioch, which met a few years after, in 269, to condemn the errors of Paul of Samoseta. But we are first told of this by the Semiarians, who assembled at Ancyra, in 358. St. Athanasius, St. Hilary, and St. Basil, if they seemed to concede the fact, maintained that if the fathers at Antioch had rejected the word *ὁμοουσιος*, they must have done so through apprehension that it might be misunderstood or abused. Upon closer examination, however, this pretended proceeding of the Antiochian fathers, is proved to be more than doubtful. It appears extraordinary, that ninety years should have passed away before the fact was mentioned, and that the Arians should have suffered so long a time to intervene, without once appealing to an apparent contradiction between this ancient decree of the council of Antioch, and the modern canon of the to them detested council of Nice. Neither at Nice itself, nor later at Antioch, in 341, nor at any synod, as far as we know, was this contradiction brought in argument against the Catholics. It is more surprising still, that Eusebius, an avowed opposer of the word *ὁμοουσιον*, speaks not of its condemnation; whilst in his epistle, which was published soon after the council of Nice, he acknowledges that the word had been used by earlier writers, and whilst in his Ecclesiastical History he cites a portion of the circular letter of the council of Antioch. With regard to the testimony of the three fathers of the Church, above named, it is evident that St. Hilary and St. Athanasius were not acquainted with the facts. St. Athanasius expressly states that he had not been able to procure a copy of the letter of the council, nor to learn its contents, and from his answer



it is clear that he had never heard of the rejection of the word. St. Basil, without any reference to the bishops who had assembled at Ancyra, says that the term *consubstantial* had been condemned at Antioch, as it appeared to the fathers to bear with it a signification not corresponding to the Catholic doctrine, (ὥς οὐκ εὐσημον), but the proofs which he adduces seem to argue that he knew nothing certain of any such condemnation, for he ascribes to the fathers of Antioch the very motive that is contained in the synodal letter written by the Semiarian bishops of Ancyra,—that the word ὁμοουσιος contains an idea of a divine substance, which is divided between the Father and the Son.\* It might have been

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\* Basilli, opp. III. 145, ed. Benedic.: “Ἐφασαν γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι (the bishop of Antioch) τὴν τοῦ ὁμοουσίου φωνὴν παριστᾶν ἐννοίαν οὐσίας τε καὶ τῶν ἀπ’ αὐτῆς, ὥστε καταμερισθεῖσαν τὴν οὐσίαν παραχεῖν τοῦ ὁμοουσίου προσηγορίαν τοῖς εἰς ἃ διηρεθαι.” He further remarks, that this is the case with metal and the coin that is struck from it; but not with God: in Him there is no ancient, original substance which preceded both, Father and Son. According to St. Hilary (De Synodis, s. 81), this same motive was alleged in the letter of the synod of Ancyra: “Quia per verbi hujus enunciationem substantia prior intelligeretur, quam duo partiti essent.” We can suppose that the Semiarians, in 358, would bring forward this forced interpretation as a pretext for rejecting the word ὁμοουσίου, but we cannot imagine what could have induced the council of Antioch to do so. In the doctrines of Paul, with which the council was then engaged, there was nothing that favoured that explanation. St. Athanasius supposes that the council rejected the word to prevent the sophistical consequences which Paul might draw from it, but the supposition is without any foundation. Paul must have attached to the word a signification contrary to its natural, evident meaning: he must have asserted that the Father and the Son were not of one substance, but that there were three substances, one more ancient, and two, the Father and the Son, that had sprung from this original substance: but can it be thought that the fathers of the council could have been so far led away as to reject and condemn a dogmatical expression, received by the Church, on account of so miserable a sophism? We could more easily imagine that this heretic had employed the term to support his real errors, and that on that account it might have been rejected by the council: he could have said the Logos is *consubstantial with the Father*, (ὁμοουσιος τῷ πατρὶ), that is without any hypostatical subsistence; he is no more than the personless intelligence of God. With this would accord that which St. Hilary says in defence of the synodal letter of the council of Ancyra, that the word had been rejected at Antioch, “quia per hanc unius essentiae nuncupationem solitarium atque unicum sibi esse Patrem et Filium

that the synod condemned the false meaning affixed to this word (which Dionysius of Rome and of Alexandria had employed, and had well understood) by Paul of Samoseta, of which partial condemnation the Semiarians at Ancyra availed themselves to employ it for their own purposes : but that the synod rejected the word in its true signification is contrary to all historical evidence.

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## SECTION VIII.

### PRINCIPLES OPPOSED BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TO THE HERETICAL SECTS.—TRADITION.

THE preceding relation has presented to our view a multiplied collection of conflicting errors and sects, of which some allured many votaries and adherents, deceiving men by a specious appearance of truth ; now enlisting in their service the most favoured opinions of the age, now flattering the basest passions and inclinations of mankind. Some of them were based upon the pride of what would be considered an all-comprehending reason ; others invited followers by offering a gratification of the senses ; others, and perhaps as many, were concealed under the dark cloud of severe restraint and mortification, and promised to unfold the mysteries of the Deity, or to lay open to the world the secrets of the world of spirits. The contest to which the Church was challenged, by her many-headed foes, was, therefore, rude, and one which called for all her powers ; at a time, moreover, when she was assailed by the blood-

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*prædicabat.*" (De Synod. p. 1196.) But in that part of the declaration of the council of Antioch, which is preserved by Eusebius, we find, rather, the accusation, that Paul had renewed the errors of Artemon, and had taught that the Son was, by nature, of this earth, not descended from Heaven. It is evident, after all, that the whole rests upon the testimony of the bishop who drew up the circular in the name of the assembly, and that the three fathers, SS. Hilary, Basil, and Athanasius, had no more than conjectures wherewith to explain the presumed rejection of the word *ὁμοουσιον*.

stained edicts of the heathens, and when her most powerful champions often fell beneath the axe of the executioner. But as pagan persecutions, so far from injuring the Church, the rather purified it, exalted the zeal of the faithful in their holy religion, and transmitted to heaven a glorious army of martyrs and intercessors for their contending and suffering brethren, the members of the Church on earth; so, also, the hostile attacks of heresy served only to endear, in the hearts of the true believers, the pure and ancient faith which they had inherited from their fathers, to draw more closely and more strongly the bond of ecclesiastical unity, and to confirm the already universal conviction, that, without an entire conformity of belief, ecclesiastical communion was impossible, and that he who should obstinately withdraw himself from the unity of faith, thereby separated himself from the Church, and from all its blessings. And if the desire to belong to the Church, which was one by the unity of its faith, and of its indissoluble love, were clear and evident in the faithful; if they had learned to consider themselves as members of the CATHOLIC CHURCH, and ever to prize more and more this high distinction; if they feared the expulsion from its communion, and the deprivation of its gifts and graces;—this desire, and this fear, became the more strong, from a contemplation of the contradictions in which heresies and sects stood against the Church. Hence was derived that word which expresses so well the distinctive properties of the Church, in opposition to all heretical sects, the use of which reaches back to the age of the Apostles, which we find in the writings of the holy Ignatius, and which is now the universal designation of the true Church of God.\* The word Catholic expresses that universality by which the Church distinguishes itself from all sects; it expresses its twofold

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\* St. Ignatius, in his epistle to the people of Smyrna, says, "wherever Christ Jesus may be, there is the CATHOLIC CHURCH." St. Polycarp prays for "the whole CATHOLIC CHURCH throughout the world." Apud Euseb. iv. 15. Dionysius calls Macrianus "the champion of the CATHOLIC CHURCH." Ep. ad Herm. apud Euseb. vii. 10.



universality of time and of place. In virtue of the former, the Church always retained within itself the consciousness, that she was the first and the last, that she reigned before sects arose, and would triumph when they should have passed away. Her children must have been confirmed in their belief of this prerogative of universality of time,—a prerogative peculiar to her, when they beheld the sects, which rose up against her, falling, soon after their appearance, back again into nothingness;—when they saw them, during their short existence, condemning and destroying those that had preceded them. By the universality of place, it was shown that all heresies and sects were confined to particular provinces or countries, and that, instead of acquiring, with time, circuit and extent, they on the contrary lost that which they had previously gained;—that they were torn by new parties, and diminished by new divisions. The Church alone knew no limits of nature or of nations: it extended to every part of the Roman dominion, and beyond the boundaries of the empire: it continued to advance and to extend in a rapid and sure course. But the word Catholic, according to its strict etymology, designated not only the *universality*, but also the *organic unity* of the Church, in contradistinction to the confused multiplicity of parts into which the opposing sects were divided.\*

As we cannot imagine the Church separated from the faith which is its foundation, its living and life-giving principle, the name Catholic must be given to the faith, and to all the doctrines professed and taught by the Church. The faith of the Church is Catholic in the same signification as is the Church itself;—with regard to time, for it is the same that was taught from the beginning by the apostles,—with regard to place, for it extends to every nation of the earth: and in this twofold universality, it is ever one and the same, not an accidental aggregate of opinions arbitrarily formed and col-

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\* See Möhler's *Unity of the Church*, p. 291: 'Ολος is used of things organically connected, and bound together, ἀπαρ, of simple aggregates.

lected, but an organic body of truths, which mutually confirm, explain and perfect each other. It was this *Catholicity of faith*, or the *principle of tradition*, which the fathers opposed to heretics, as the strongest and most sufficient proof of the truth of the doctrines taught by the Church. For when they combated the vain imaginings of heretics, and defended the religion of Christ against their attacks, they knew indeed that it was expedient or necessary to refute every special error, to reply to every objection, and to oppose every violent interpretation of the Divine word ; but they knew also, that this method was not sufficient to protect the Church, to confirm the wavering in their faith, and to conduct back those who had been led astray by the artifices and sophisms of heretics : they saw that it was necessary to establish an universal, infallible rule of faith, by which any Christian, at any moment, without descending to every particular point of controversy, might distinguish, with security, the true doctrines of Christ and his apostles, from the false, private teachings of heretics ; and having distinguished them, might embrace and defend them without fear of error. This rule was the universal and uninterrupted tradition of the Church, which is no more than the Catholic faith comprised in its origin and continuation. To this tradition, all the fathers appeal against the heretics, or what is the same thing, they show the absolute necessity of hearing the Church, and the Church alone ; not themselves or any other individuals.\* Two of these fathers, Ire-

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\* He, who does not believe the Church, either believes a man, by whose presumed authority he suffers himself to be guided and seduced to receive an opinion or a collection of opinions as the truth,—and this is a disgraceful slavery,—or he believes himself, adopts the opinions which he thinks he finds in the sacred Scriptures, explained and interpreted according to his own ideas and prejudices. Strictly speaking, out of the Church there is no faith no subjection to (legitimate) authority, and it is evident that the Church alone possesses the true faith ; that is, that not only what is believed in the Church is alone true ; but that the faith in the Church is alone true. Out of the Church you see only, first, a continual seeking, choosing, doubting, an arbitrary selecting and rejecting ; or secondly, a self-sufficient, proud confidence in an adopted and cherished opinion, a satisfaction and repose in ideas discovered or imagined

næus and Tertullian, have expressly set forth this principle of tradition, and have applied to the heresies of their times all the consequences which necessarily flow from it,—consequences which, with the principle itself, are of force in every age, and against every error. The former has done this in his work against the Gnostics; the latter in a book written for this purpose, and to which he gave the title of *Præscriptiones*, a term borrowed from the language of Roman jurisprudence. Their exposition of this principle and of its consequences, may be embraced within the following sections.

1. The Church has received the charisma of truth, as a gift that should remain with it for ever: the apostles placed their doctrines in the Church as in a rich treasury, and it is only in the Church that they can now be found. But as the universal Church is in possession of apostolical truth, so is every particular Church or community, as being a member of the great whole, so long as it continue in union with the whole.

2. The apostles still live and teach in the persons of their successors, the bishops: these are what the apostles were—the organs, the guardians, and the defenders of the faith, of the apostolical tradition. As in the Church there exists an unbroken succession of bishops, which commences with an apostle, or with a bishop appointed by an apostle, so by this succession, the faith has been uninterruptedly handed down from generation to generation, in the full integrity and purity in which it was taught by the apostles. The doctrine of the apostles was not therefore a transitory thing, which is to be sought in history, or discovered by criticism: it was living, it has never died, and is always present.

3. When doubts or contentions arose, the apostolical, parent, or mother-Churches, (*ecclesiæ matricēs*) which had been founded immediately by the apostles,—and more than all others, the Church of Rome, with which all must be joined in an union of faith, spoke in a deci-

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by accident, and which have their foundation in pride, or in a spiritual indifference or sloth: or thirdly, a senseless and blind adoption of the self-formed faith of another man. All this is not faith, but delusion.



sive voice in judgment. Churches that were established at a later period, were also apostolical by descent, and by their relationship in doctrine (*pro consanguinitate doctrinæ*); but in these daughter-Churches there always existed a subjection to their parent, more particularly to the Roman Church.

4. In controversies with heretics, who rejected all ecclesiastical authority and tradition, and appealed to the Scriptures alone, the Scriptures were separated from tradition; but, as a part, they belong to ecclesiastical tradition, and are essentially one and the same thing with it. The gospel, therefore, that has been preached to the world, although divided into two parts, the written and the living, is only one: the former cannot be torn from the latter part; for, as a dead letter, it stands in need of explanation and interpretation, which can be given only by the living, and by the ever-pealing voice of tradition in the Church. And more, as oral tradition existed before the first documents of written tradition, that is, before the sacred Scriptures, oral tradition (which in process of time was committed to writing) is more complete, more entire than the written. Now heretics, who have renounced the living gospel of tradition, and to whom, therefore, the holy Scriptures do not belong, ought not to be permitted to appeal to them, for they have lost the only key which could open their meaning to them.

5. As the Church cannot exist without faith, nor faith without the lasting truth and purity of tradition, so this is preserved by that spirit of truth, which was promised and given to the Church. The conservation of the pure doctrines of the apostles is therefore insured, not only by the institution of the episcopacy, but also by the never-failing influence of the Divine Spirit, which abides with the Church for ever; and the Church is consequently protected from error, both by the continuation of the apostleship in the succession of duly ordained bishops, and by that indwelling spirit of God, from which, as from an ever flowing stream, it receives its faith in every moment of its existence. Thus, Christ

and the Holy Ghost are in a perpetual relation with the Church, and, through it, with all its members.\* Only the Church therefore, can truly interpret the sacred Scriptures, for only in the Church does that spirit dwell by which the Scriptures were inspired.

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## SECTION IX.

### DIVISIONS AND CONTESTS IN THE CHURCH :

#### MONTANUS, AND THE MONTANISTS :

##### THE ALOGI—HIERACAS.†

THE gift of vision and of prophecy was imparted to many of the faithful, in the first, the apostolical age of the Church. Of the number of those who were thus endowed, were Silas, Agabas, and the daughters of Philip. In the second century, the Apologist Quadratus, and a female at Philadelphia, named Ammia, also received the gift of prophecy. To no gift of grace could deception approach so near as to this, because in nature there is something analagous to this foresight (vision in somnambulism) which, although appertaining to the region of nature, is excluded from the kingdom of grace, but which can produce effects and appearances similar to those of Divine ecstasies : again, because here man is exposed to the delusions and allurements of vanity and pride, and, in consequence of this perversion, to demo-

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\* “ Fides nostra...quæ semper a spiritu Dei quasi in vase bono eximium quoddam depositum juvenescens et juvenescere faciens ipsum vas in quo est [the Church]. Hoc enim ecclesiæ creditum est Dei munus quemadmodum ad inspirationem plasmationi [that is, faith is given to the Church as the breath of the Holy Ghost, to animate it] ad hoc, ut omnia membra percipientia vivificentur; et in eo disposita est communicatio Christi, id est, Spiritus Sanctus, *arrha incorruptelæ et confirmatio fidei nostræ*, et scala ascensionis ad Deum.—Ubi enim ecclesia, ibi et spiritus Dei, et ubi spiritus Dei, illic ecclesia et omnis gratia; spiritus autem veritas.”—*Irenæi*, lib. iii. c. xxiv. p. 223, edit. Massuet.

† Euseb. Hist. Eccles. v. 16-19; Tertullianus, De pudicitia; De fuga in persecutione; De jejuniis; De monogamia; De cultu feminarum; De virginibus velandis; De exhortatione castitatis.—Epiph. Hæres. 48.—On the Alogi, see Epiph. Hæres. 51. Irenæum, iii. 11.—On Hieracas, Epiph. Hæres. 67.

niacal influence, by which he is made the organ through which the spirit of error and of lies may speak. It has therefore, always been the care of the Church strictly to examine those who have laid claim to the gift of prophecy, to prove, by the spirit which she has received, the spirit which had manifested itself in these true or imaginary prophets. Should the vision or the prophecies which these seers announced as the effects of Divine inspiration, contradict in any respect the doctrines or the precepts of the Church, then the ecstasy in which they had been received was declared to be a delusion, and the spirit by which the visionary spoke, to be not the spirit of truth; the person, who had been the subject of the revelation, was declared, not a holy man free from the dross of the senses and of self-love, but a man stained by sin, and deluded by unholy imaginations.

Montanus, a neophyte of Ardaban, a village in Mysia, on the borders of Phrygia, about the year 171, fell into a state of violent ecstasy, during which he predicted an approaching persecution, together with the judgments of Heaven that should fall on the persecutors; he exhorted the faithful to contend vigorously for the crown of martyrdom, and to prepare for the conflict by lives of severe self-denial. But his state was not the calm manifestation and fervour of a saint: it was a wild, fitful and fretful enthusiasm, bordering upon a fury, which retained entire consciousness, and upon which physical causes probably exerted a powerful influence. It has been supposed that Montanus and his prophetesses were at first the dupes of an unintentional delusion, and that visions in which he had formerly indulged were reflected in his ecstasies, but that in the course of time he practised voluntary deception upon his followers. Two rich and noble ladies, Priscilla and Maximilla, who had forsaken their husbands, became followers of Montanus, and immediately imagined themselves to have been elevated to the rank of prophetesses. There were soon found many in Phrygia, who gave entire faith to the revelations of the master and of these his prophetesses, and although the bishops of the province examined the affair in seve-



ral synods, condemned the predictions of the new prophets as false and profane, and excommunicated the authors of them, Montanism nevertheless soon spread even beyond Asia Minor. The severity of life, and the appearance of sanctity, which these infatuated people threw around their errors, seduced many better and wiser than themselves,\*—even the great Tertullian, who dedicated his vast learning and high talents to defend their doctrine. It appears that the heads of the party obtained an approbation of the bishop from Rome; and by their deceptions they so far succeeded, as to induce one pontiff, probably Victor, to declare a favourable opinion of the prophetic gift of Montanus, Priscilla and Maxamilla, and to receive their congregations in Asia Minor into the communion of the Church. But a more accurate knowledge of the character and doctrines of the sect, which he received from the Phrygian Praxeas, and the authority of his predecessors, who had sanctioned the decrees of the Asiatic bishops, induced him to recall his letters of peace and communion.

The principle of Montanism was, that Divine revelation, as far as it regarded faith, was determined and perfected by Christ and his apostles; but that discipline, the rules of a Christian life according to the precepts of the Redeemer and his disciples, have not been fully regulated, and therefore required further development and formations by a new revelation. To corroborate this doctrine, the Montanists appealed to that progressive order which the Almighty had observed, in the economy of grace, in the institution and establishment of his Divine kingdom on earth; but of this truth, they made an erroneous and anti-Christian application. Under the law and the prophets, they said, the kingdom of

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\* The chiefs and prophets of the party were accused of avarice and luxury by Apollonius, who lived at the same time and in the same country with them. According to his accounts, Montanus appointed money-receivers, and encouraged the people to offer gifts: even the prophetesses condescended to receive presents. It was objected to the Montanist prophets that they coloured their hair, adorned their persons, let out money at interest, and were much addicted to games of chance.—See Euseb. v. 18.

God was in its infancy; during the preaching of Christ, it attained to the vigour of youth: still the maturity of age was wanting, but would be imparted to it by new revelations of the Paraclete. Christ and the apostles, even St. Paul, condescended to the weakness of their times: they therefore spared the people in many things, as Moses of old had yielded much to the hard hearts of the Israelites.\* But the time of weakness and of indulgence had passed away: according to the promise of Christ, that the Holy Ghost would reveal much which the disciples could not then bear, this revelation, perfecting the former, was now made through the mouths of Montanus and his two prophetesses; the Paraclete had manifested itself through these his chosen instruments, to raise Christian discipline to its perfection; and it was therefore the duty of every Christian to subject himself freely and willingly to the new commands and precepts of the spirit of God. As the Catholics refused their submission to these pretended revelations of the Paraclete, they were viewed by the Montanists as mere natural carnal-minded men, who being void of the Spirit, rejected his commandments; they esteemed themselves as men of truly spiritual minds, and their sect as the Church of the spirit, whilst the Catholics could call themselves only the Church of the bishops.†

According to the revelations of the Montanist Paraclete, all those who, after baptism, had been guilty of grievous sins, fornication or adultery, could receive no

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\* "Regnavit duritia cordis usque ad Christum, regnaverit et infirmitas carnis usque ad Paracletum."—Tertull. De Monogam.

† "Et ideo ecclesia quidem delicta condonabit, sed ecclesia spiritus per spiritalem hominem, *non ecclesia numerus episcoporum*."—Tertull. De Pudicit. c. xxi. By such and similar strong expressions, we might be induced to believe that the Montanists had formally separated themselves from the Catholic Church, and that they deemed this separation necessary: in some places this schism did in fact take place. But with the above passage let us compare another from Tertullian, De Virg. Vel. c. ii.: "Una nobis et illis fides, unus Deus, idem Christus, eadem spes, eadem lavacri sacramenta: semel dixerim, *una ecclesia sumus*." This I consider to have been Tertullian's real sentiment, and that we should ascribe the passages which seem to contradict this, to his violent heat of controversy.

remission of them from the Church, and, consequently, could not be admitted to the communion of the Church : they might be exhorted to repentance, and take part in the public ecclesiastical penance, but they must look for pardon, not from the power of the Church, but from the grace of God. The Montanists, while they denied that the Catholic Church had received power to remit these enormous sins, claimed it for the prophets of their own party. These prophets, however, never exercised their privilege, for as one of their number declared, “ the Church (*ecclesia spiritus*, the spiritually-minded Church, and in particular, the prophets) can pardon sins, but I never would do so, lest others should sin.” Upon the same authority, they based their new laws of fasting : they pronounced that the observance of these fasts alone were necessary, for they rejected the fasts of the Church, either on account of their severity, or of the source whence they were derived. In addition to the ordinary fast which preceded Easter, they introduced the *xerophagi*, which were observed in two weeks of the year, with the exception of Saturday and Sunday ; during which fast they took no other than dry, tasteless food, and water : they prolonged the weekly fasts on Wednesdays and Fridays (on which days the Catholics took their meal at three in the afternoon) until after the setting of the sun. By another law, the Montanists prohibited second marriages after the death of husband or wife : those who should presume to marry a second time, they expelled from their Church. More severe yet was the precept that forbade Christians to flee or to secrete themselves in times of persecution : the faithful were commanded not to avoid death for the faith, but to consider it as the greatest of all happiness, and to strive with every effort to gain the crown of martyrdom, “ Desire not,” says one of their oracles, “ desire not to die upon your beds, in child-birth, or in a debilitating fever ; but aspire to die as martyrs, that he, who suffered for you, may be glorified in you.” Hence, the Montanists boasted of the many martyrs who had adorned their Church, the constancy of whom they proclaimed



to be a proof of the Divine nature of the revelations for which they suffered. Lastly, they severely reprehended the Catholics, because in some of their Churches they permitted virgins to appear unveiled, an abuse not tolerated in the assemblies of the faithful.\*

Montanus and his prophetesses foretold also the near approach of the destruction of the world, and of the consequent reign of happiness for a thousand years. Pepuza and Tymium, two villages of Phrygia, were to be the future celestial Jerusalem, and the happy abodes of blessed souls. The Montanists were, therefore, sometimes named Pepuzians or Kataphrygians (οἱ κατὰ φρυγίας.) In the time of Tertullian, their hierarchy differed but little from that of the Catholic Church. St. Jerome is the first who relates that their bishops occupied the third rank, that over them stood a class called overseers, and that a patriarch, who resided at Pepuza, was the head of their Church. How far the small and almost unknown sects of the Artotyrites, and of the Tascodrugites or Passalorynchites, were similar to the Montanists, it is now impossible to determine. Of the former, it is related that in their Eucharistic sacrifice, they offered cheese with the bread, and that they raised females to the dignity of priest, and even of bishop. The latter received their name from their practice of placing their finger on their mouth during prayer, to signify, that prayer to God should be interior and not expressed in words.

A controversy with the Montanists was the origin of

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\* As all these points of difference were represented by the Montanists as being taught by the Holy Ghost, the controversy between them and the Catholics could have been reduced to this one question: Do these new revelations proceed from the spirit of God? Tertullian was fully aware of this, for thus he speaks (adv. Prax. c. 1): "Et nos quidem postea agnitio Paracleti, atque defensio, disjunxit a Psychicis." In Tertullian, even when a Montanist, there survived a Catholic and ecclesiastical spirit, which forced him, when not borne away by his violence of disputation, to make the difference between the Catholics and Montanists as small as possible. Thus in his work that has perished, "A Defence of Montanus," a fragment of which has however been preserved by the author of the book *Prædestinatus*, he says, "Hoc solum discrepamus, quod secundas nuptias non recipimus et prophetiam Montani de futuro judicio non recusamus."—Compare De Jejunio, cap. 1.

a sect, the members of which, on account of a consequence drawn from their doctrines, were called by St. Epiphanius, *Alogists*, men who believed not in the Logos, the Word. When the Montanists at Thyatira, had gained over nearly the whole community to their party, a few Christians of the city opposed them with such inconsiderate zeal, that they rejected the gospel and the apocalypse of St. John, both of which they ascribed to the heresiarch Cerinthus; not on any historical grounds, but, because in the gospel there was contained a promise of the Paraclete, upon which the Montanists founded their claims to revelation, and because in the apocalypse the same heretics pretended to discover the proofs of their millennium. Carried away by the same impetuosity of contradiction, the Alogi denied that the gift of prophecy existed in the Church; and as they appealed to the difference that is to be found in the gospel of St. John, from the gospels of the other three evangelists, it is probable, that they impugned the divinity of the Logos, and approached therefore near to Antitrinitarians of the sects of Theodotus and Artemon. From their rejection of the Logos, they derived their appellation. Whether this heresy extended beyond Thyatira, and how long it existed, is now unknown.

Connected with the Montanists by his severe asceticism, was the Egyptian Hieracas, to whom, on account of his erroneous doctrines, we may fearlessly assign a place amongst the heretics of his age. He lived at the end of the third century, at Leontopolis in Egypt, and was possessed of great learning: he wrote commentaries on the Scripture, in the Greek and Coptic languages, and in the midst of severe corporal austerities, attained the advanced age of ninety years. Following his master, Origen, he interpreted many parts of the Old Testament in an allegorical sense: he denied the reality of the terrestrial paradise, and considered the narrations contained in the book of Genesis as no more than symbolical representations,—of what we are not informed: the history of Melchisedec he viewed only as an allegory relating to the Holy Ghost. His denial of the resurrection

of the body sprung from his excessive, rather Gnostic or Manichean, than Christian asceticism. For, according to his teaching, the essence of Christian morality, that by which it was distinguished from the ethics of the old law, was the abstinence from marriage, from flesh, and from wine commanded by the Messias, and although he granted that St. Paul permitted matrimony, it was to avoid greater evils; he maintained that the state of celibacy was for all the surest way to happiness. While he thus, derogating from the grace of God, prescribed severities which exceeded the ordinary strength of men, for the attainment of beatitude, he, as a consequence, closed the entrance into heaven to all children who died before the age of reason: they had not gained for themselves merit in the combat, they could not therefore be crowned. Hieracas formed a society of perfect ascetics, into which only unmarried men, virgins, and widows, were admitted. This ascetic society, or religious order, continued to exist many years after the death of its founder, under the name of Hieraclites, but it soon mitigated its primitive severity. Whether these Hieraclites adopted the erroneous doctrines contained in the writings of Hieracas, and thus separated themselves from the Church, is and must remain doubtful.

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\* Arius, in a letter to the Bishop Alexander, which has been preserved by St. Epiphanius and St. Athanasius, says, that Hieracas taught that the Son was in the same relation to the Father, as the flame of a lamp is to another flame from which it has been taken, or as a flame that is divided into two parts (*ὡς λυχρον ἀπο λυχρον, ἢ ὡς λαμπαδα εἰς δύο*). This doctrine was repudiated by Alexander. It would, however, necessarily follow from these similitudes, that Hieracas entertained an erroneous idea of the Trinity. St. Epiphanius defends him on this point, and his similitudes are not more inappropriate than many others that were employed: that they were fully adequate, Hieracas himself would probably not have maintained.

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## SECTION X.

DISPUTES ON THE CELEBRATION OF EASTER, AND ON  
THE MILLENNIUM.\*

FROM the time of the apostles, the paschal solemnity had been celebrated on different days in different Churches. The Churches of Asia Minor conformed to the practice of the Jews; for, like the Jews, they eat the paschal lamb on the night of the thirteenth and fourteenth day of the month Nisan, and three days after commemorated the triumphant resurrection of our Redeemer. The solemnization of the paschal supper was observed as a memorial of that last supper, of which our Saviour and his apostles partook on the evening which preceded his sufferings; and because, as St. Paul says, (1 Cor. v. 7), the paschal lamb was a figure of the immolated Jesus, it appeared, therefore, to them to be inseparably connected with the commemoration of his death on the cross. The day on which the faithful mourned the sufferings of their Saviour, was, in the ancient Church, called the *Pasch*,† and it was, therefore, said that the Christians of Asia Minor celebrated their *pasch* on the fourteenth Nisan: but that which is now understood by the word *pasch*, the day of our Lord's resurrection, they celebrated on the third day following, on whatever day of the week it might fall. Their Easter-day would consequently not often correspond with the Sunday. On the contrary, the other Churches, and in particular the

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\* Euseb. H. Eccl. v. 23-25; Epiphanius, Hær. 50; Euseb. iii. 39-28; vii. 44, 25; Irenæus, v. 25-36; Lactantius Inst. Div. vii. 14-25.

Gabr. Daniel, "Sur la Discipline des Quarto-decimans pour la Célébration de la Pâque." Paris, 1724, 4to. III. 473, of his "Recueil de divers Ouvrages."

H. Corrodi, "Critische Geschichte des Chiliasmus." (Critical History of the Millennium.) Zurich, 1794, 4 parts.

† When the commemoration of the sufferings of our Lord, and of his resurrection, were spoken of separately, it was customary to name the first *πασχα σταυρωσιμον*, and the second *πασχα αναστασιμον*. So general, however, did it become to call the first simply *πασχα*, that the word *Pasch* was supposed by many, as St. Augustine mentions, to have been derived from the Greek verb, *πασχεν*, to suffer.

Church of Rome, celebrated the day of the resurrection always on a Sunday, and commenced, on the preceding Friday, the commemoration of the passion. Hence arose this great difference of practice, that, while the great body of Christians were preparing, by fasting, for the solemn festival of Easter, the Asiatics terminated their fast on the thirteenth Nisan, and fasted not on the day when they celebrated the passion of Christ, which in the general feeling of Christians was considered a day of deep mourning. That this variation was a source of great confusion, and that an uniformity of practice was greatly to be desired, was acknowledged by both parties in an early age; and when Polycarp, the holy bishop of Smyrna, went to Rome, in the year 162, to visit pope Anicetus, he consulted with that pontiff on this subject. Both appealed to the ancient, apostolical, tradition of their Churches; Polycarp to the ordinance of the apostle St. John; Anicetus to the practice established by his predecessors St. Peter and St. Paul. It is more than probable that St. John caused to be observed, in the Churches which he had founded, and which were composed almost exclusively of Jewish converts, the Jewish calculation of time in the celebration of the pasch, whilst in the Church of Rome and in others, which were formed of converts from heathenism, no paschal lamb was eaten, and the memory of our Lord's resurrection was celebrated on the day on which he arose from the dead,—on a Sunday. Although Polycarp and Anicetus could not combine their opinions, they separated in peace and friendship: the variation continued; but towards the close of the second century, an almost universal desire was expressed to introduce an exact similarity of rite into all parts of the Church. In different provinces, in Palestine, in Pontus, in Oschroene and in Gaul, at Rome, and at Corinth, synods were held, in the year 196, in all of which it was declared that the Christian pasch was entirely independant of the Jewish solemnity, and that Sunday was the day on which it was proper to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Pope Victor now required of the

bishops of Asia Minor, that they should meet in synod, and establish the practice which had been sanctioned by the other Churches. This requisition was accompanied by the threat, that if they persevered in preferring the ceremonial of the Jews to the decrees of the Christian Church, he would cut them off from all communion with that Church. In obedience to the commands of the Pope, Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, convoked the assembly of bishops, and after their deliberations, he replied to the pope that they could not depart from their primitive usages; that they followed in their celebration of Easter, not only the authority of the gospel history, but the example also of the apostles Philip and John, and of many holy bishops and martyrs: as to the threat of excommunication with which he had menaced them, they would reply, that they had learned that it was their duty to obey God rather than man. It does not, however, appear, that the pope suspended ecclesiastical communion with the Churches of Asia Minor: many bishops united in their prayers to dissuade him from this extreme measure. St. Irenæus, in the name of the Churches of Gaul, besought him to imitate the forbearance of his predecessor, who would not disturb the harmony of the Church, on account of a simple variation of discipline which seemed to strengthen more and more the unity of faith.

The idea of a kingdom of Christ upon earth, which should endure for a thousand years, passed from Judaism into Christianity. The Jews, misinterpreting the words of the Psalm, (xc. 4) that a thousand years are only as a day before the Lord, imagined that the six days of creation, with the day of rest which followed them, were a type of the duration of the world—a period of six thousand years, with one thousand of repose and happiness. They imagined that during these thousand years the Messiah should reign from Jerusalem over all the people of the earth; that the Jews, his chosen people, should be collected together from their dispersion, and should partake of his glory and dominion. In the mind of those Christians, who did not entirely



abandon this idea after their conversion, this earthly kingdom became one more conformable to a Christian spirit: they pictured to themselves a happy state, in which the virtuous and the holy, after their many tribulations during their mortal life, should enjoy a blessed peace and undisturbed tranquillity, under their king, Jesus Christ; that the earth, being freed from the curse which sin had called down upon it, should bring forth its abundant fruits without labour or toil.

But this was by no means the universal belief of the first Christians. In the genuine works of the apostolical fathers, Clement, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp, no trace of this Millennium can be found. The credulous Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, was, we believe, the first writer who taught the doctrine of the Millennarians, interpreting certain expressions of the apostles, which he had heard from their disciples, and which referred to the kingdom of Christ in heaven, according to his own limited understanding. After him, St. Justin, the martyr, declared in his *Dialogue with Tryphon*, that he and many others believed, that Jerusalem would be again rebuilt, and that Christians would live there with Christ and the patriarchs, in pure pleasure and joy. He, however, immediately adds, "There are many Christians of pure and devout mind, who do not admit this."\* He was, therefore, far from

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\* Dial. cum Tryphone, p. 306, ed. Colon.: "πολλους δ' αὖ καὶ τῶν τῆς καθαρᾶς καὶ εὐσεβούς οὐτων Χριστιανῶν γνώμης μὴ γνωρίζειν ἐσθλὰ σοι." Münscher, in his History of Dogmatics, ii. 455, following Dallæus and others, conjectures that the negative particle *μη* has fallen from this sentence, and that we should read *τῶν μὴ καθαρᾶς*, ("not of pure and devout mind," &c.) for thus only can the evident contradiction which now exists, be taken away, when we make St. Justin say, "that those who do not admit the Millennium with himself and others, are not true Christians." Many moderns have entered into this view, and have inserted the particle *μη* in the text. But this is a false view, arising from a total misunderstanding of the passage, in which there is no contradiction. St. Justin does not, as Münscher pretends, speak of only two classes of Christians,—the Gnostics, who denied not only the Millennium, but likewise the resurrection of the flesh,—and orthodox Christians, who admitted both. He evidently distinguishes three classes: those who believe with him in a future resurrection, and in the thousand years' kingdom, those true Christians who believed in the resur-

defending his own belief as a necessary article of faith, or as the universal doctrine of the Church. But the chief patron and vindicator of this belief was St. Irenæus, in his work against the Gnostics, who rejected the Millennium as the dream of sensual-minded men. Against them, St. Irenæus endeavoured to demonstrate that the promise of such a kingdom was contained in the Old and New Testaments: he appealed to the promise of God, not yet fulfilled, that Abraham and his seed (the Christians) should possess the land of Canaan; to the descriptions contained in the writings of the prophets Isaias and Daniel and in the Apocalypse; to the declaration of Christ, that his disciples should eat of the fruit of the new vine with him in his kingdom, and that in this same kingdom they should receive a hundred-fold for all that they had done and given to the poor for his sake. The kingdom of Antichrist—such

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rection, but not in the Millennium; and the Gnostics, who were in name Christians, but were in truth impious heretics, who blasphemed the God of Abraham, (the God of the Old Testament), who denied the resurrection of the flesh, and who did not, therefore, merit the name of Christians. He does not object to these last the rejection of the Millennium, as, in comparison with their fundamental errors, this was of no importance. If St. Justin had thought that the belief of the Millennium was common to all Christians of his time, he would not have said "I and many others," but "I and all the faithful," or "I with the entire Church;" and if he had understood the Gnostics by those who did not agree with him on this subject, he would not have contented himself with saying, that they were "not of pure and devout minds," for he is not sparing in his invectives against them; neither would he have designated them as Christians, for he absolutely denies this title to the Gnostics. To prove this imaginary contradiction, Munscher translates correctly, the last assertion of St. Justin: "*Εγω δε, και ειτινες εισιν ορθογνωμονες κατα παντα Χριστιανοι, και σαρκος αναστασιν γενεσεσθαι επισταμεθα, και χιλια ετη εν Ιηρουσαλημ οικοδομηθειση και κοσμηθειση και παγαυνηθειση οι Προφηται Ιεζεχιηλ και Ησαιας και οι αλλοι ομολογουσιν.*" Which he translates, "I, on the contrary, and all other orthodox Christians, know, that a future resurrection and a kingdom of a thousand years, in the newly rebuilt, adorned and enlarged Jerusalem, are unanimously foretold by the prophets." The sense is rather, "I and those Christians, who believe rightly in all things, we know, that there will be a resurrection of the flesh: that there shall be a kingdom of a thousand years in Jerusalem, this the prophets unanimously declare." According to St. Justin, therefore, the belief in the resurrection of the flesh, not in the Millennium, was a proof of true orthodoxy. See Klenker "On the Apocalypse of St. John," p. 31.

is the idea of the Millennarian kingdom, as it is found in the writings of St. Irenæus and Lactantius—the kingdom of Antichrist, which shall continue four years and a half, shall precede the kingdom of Christ. This wicked one shall permit Divine adorations to be given to him in Jerusalem, and shall unite in himself all the crime and iniquity, all the lies and deceit of past ages. After the destruction of those who adhere to him, the first resurrection, the resurrection of the just, will follow: Jesus Christ will descend in all his glory from Heaven, and commence the thousand years of his kingdom in the restored and beautiful Jerusalem: the just shall enjoy with him an uninterrupted sabbath of holy joy, and eat of the fruits which the earth shall then bring forth in unmeasurable abundance. But this kingdom shall be only an inferior degree of happiness,—a preparation for that higher, celestial, most pure felicity; a preparation for the enjoyment of the sight of God, in the society of the angels. At the end of this kingdom, Satan, being freed from his chains, shall bear away all those who had hitherto been under the dominion of the just, to subdue the holy city by war: but God will extirpate them by earthquakes and by fire. The thousand years being passed, the second resurrection and the last judgment shall succeed. The virtuous, clothed with ethereal bodies like the angels, shall enjoy most pure delights; they shall dwell, some upon the new earth, some in the new Jerusalem, others in Heaven, according to their merits, but all shall see God.

In the works which Tertullian composed before his defection from the true faith to Montanism, we discover nothing that favours the doctrine of the Millennium; but when a Montanist, he defended this system in a work, now lost, entitled, *On the Christian's Hope*; and in the third book of his work against Marcion, he expressed his belief of a future kingdom in the new Jerusalem, which should be built by God, and should descend upon the earth from heaven.\* But a distinguished adversary

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\* When Tertullian, in confirmation of his idea, mentions the appearance of a city which was seen to descend every morning from Heaven



of the Millennarian doctrines was found in the Roman priest Caius, who, in his writings against the Montanist Proclus, declares the kingdom of a thousand years to have been no more than a vain fable, invented by the heretic Cerinthus. This Gnostic, he says, pretended that, in a revelation which came through a great apostle from an angel, there was promised to men a kingdom, in which it would be given to them to enjoy all delights, even those which are now considered criminal. It has often been supposed, that Caius, in the ardour of his zeal, was led to pronounce the apocalypse of St. John, on the authority of which the Chiliasts founded their doctrines, as a forgery of Cerinthus: but from what Caius says of the rude, sensual doctrines of Cerinthus, it would seem that he spoke not of the book of the holy apostle, but of an apocryphal work, which, with or without reason, he ascribed to Cerinthus.\* However this may be, the determined opposition of the Roman priest will prove, that the errors of the Millennarians had not gained admittance into his Church. The Church of Alexandria also, and the school of theology that had been established in that city, met the same doctrines with determined opposition. Origen expressed himself with vehemence against those who interpret those passages of the sacred Scripture, which promise to us spiritual blessings under sensible forms, in a Judaical sense, and adopt the foolish fable, that we shall be seated at tables to partake of bodily meat and drink after the resurrection. But the Millennium also found its champion in Egypt. Nepos, the learned bishop of the Arsinoitic Nomos, wrote a work against the assertion of Origen, that the passages of Scripture by which the Chiliasts defended themselves should be interpreted in an allegorical sense: his book was entitled, *A Confutation of*

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during the Parthian campaign in Palestine, and which became invisible as the light of day encreased, we must suppose the phenomenon to have been of the nature of those apparitions which in modern times are known by the name of *Fata Morgana*.

\* Theodoret also says of Cerinthus, (Hær. Fab. ii. 31): “Ἀποκαλύψει τινὰς ὡς αὐτὸς τεθεαμένος ἐπλασάτο.”

*Allegorists.* This work, of a great and learned man, produced an effect highly favourable to the doctrine of the Millennium in some parts of Egypt, particularly in Arsinoe, so that entire communities separated themselves from the metropolitan Church of Alexandria. Afflicted at this schism, the great bishop Dionysius of Alexandria visited the province, and, in 255, summoned a council of priests from the towns and villages. In a calm and amicable conference, which continued for three days, from morning till evening, he confuted the book of Nepos, and answered all the doubts and objections of the Chiliast party. His success exceeded his expectations. Coration,<sup>a</sup> the chief of the party, abjured his errors unconditionally, and embraced, in the presence of all assembled, his former doctrines. Dionysius now wrote a work *On the Promises* (περι ἐπαγγελιῶν), in which he fully expresses himself on the Apocalypse: he mentions and rejects the opinion of some, the Alogi, who maintained this to be the work of Cerinthus; but although his illustrious predecessors in the catechetical school, Clement and Origen, declared, without any hesitation, St. John the apostle to have been its author, this appeared to him very doubtful, not on historical grounds, but from the difference of ideas and expression in this and in the uncontested writings of the holy apostle. He supposed that another John, who lived also in Asia Minor, and who was a holy and inspired man, wrote the book of the Apocalypse.\*

About the middle of the third century, the number

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\* The aversion to the Millennarian system in the East appears to have been the cause why the Apocalypse was not read there publicly in the Church, and sometimes not privately by the faithful. This will explain, also, why this book is not named amongst the canonical books of Scripture by St. Cyril of Jerusalem, nor in the 60th canon of the council of Laodicea, nor in the 85th apostolical canon, although nearly all the Greek fathers received it as the genuine production of St. John. In the Western Church it was always attributed to the Apostle; we find, however, that Philastrius, at the end of the fourth century, does not enumerate the Apocalypse among the canonical books of Scripture. (De Hæres. c. 88.) He, without doubt, classed it amongst those books which he names *abscondita*, that is, *apocrypha*, “quæ etsi legi debent morum causa a perfectis, non ab omnibus legi debent.”

of those who adhered to this belief began rapidly to decrease. Methodius, Victorinus of Petavia, and particularly Lactantius, were still amongst its supporters; but theirs were solitary voices, which could not again call back the departed spirit of the Millennium. It must have fallen the more rapidly, as it never belonged to any doctrine of the Church, and had never struck its roots amongst the great body of Christians: it was no more than the private opinion of individuals, many of whom were, indeed, men of high authority in the Church, and had extended itself only to particular communities. Had these Chiliastic doctrines entered deeply into the faith of the people, it would have required a longer period of time to destroy them; for the people will not easily part with ideas of sensible pleasures which have been once promised to them, and of which they have anticipated the enjoyment; and we should now have had to combat with the inclinations of men towards a Millennium of earthly delights. This is not the case, and hence we see how groundless is the assertion of Gibbon, that the persuasion in the minds of the people that they should enjoy these thousand years of pleasure, assisted greatly to accelerate the progress of Christianity. We know, on the contrary, from Origen, that the doctrine of the Millennium seriously injured the cause of the Christians in the minds of the pagans. This doctrine was henceforth known only in Asia Minor, its native region: here Papias first embraced and propagated it: here St. Justin and St. Irenæus adopted and defended it; and here, in the fourth century, was found one of its last supporters, the younger Apollinaris, bishop of Laodicea, who, although he was reported to be the author of new errors, was unable to reinvigorate the ancient and decaying system of past years. We are struck with wonder when we behold in his doctrines of the Millennium the great prevalence of Judaism. He taught not only that the Temple of Jerusalem should be rebuilt, but that the entire Jewish worship, and the sacrifices of the law, should be again established.

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## SECTION XI.

SCHISM OF FELICISSIMUS AND NOVATUS AT CARTHAGE,  
AND OF NOVATIAN AT ROME.—CONTROVERSY ON  
BAPTISM CONFERRED BY HERETICS.\*

DURING the persecution of Decius, the Church of Carthage, being deprived of its chief pastor, St. Cyprian, who yielded to the storm, and retired for a short time from the city, became the scene of the machinations of a party, composed of the basest and most wicked of its members. Felicissimus, a rich, and by his wealth a powerful deacon; Novatus, a priest, both convicted of many crimes and suspected of others; five priests, who had opposed themselves to the election of St. Cyprian, and who had since harboured a secret hatred against him,—sought by every means of excitement, by bribes, and by odious calumnies, to excite the people against their bishop, and to attach them to themselves. They promised to receive into *their* communion those who had fallen in the persecution, and who were discontented with the severity of St. Cyprian towards them; and thus these turbulent men succeeded in forming a considerable party, which was accustomed to assemble on a eminence in or near Carthage. After his return, in 251, St. Cyprian convened a numerous synod, which excommunicated Felicissimus, Novatus, and the other five priests. The party thereupon elected one of these priests, named Fortunatus, as their bishop. He was consecrated by five Numidian prelates, infamous by their errors in doctrine, or by their apostacy in the persecution. Fortunatus endeavoured, but in vain, to procure the approbation of his election from the See of Rome.

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\* Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. vi. 43-45; Cyprian. epp. 38, 49, 50, 53, 55; Euseb. vii. 3-5; Acta Concilii Carthag. de Baptismo tertii; apud Routh. Reliq. Sacræ III., 91 et seqq.

(Giov. Marchetti), Esercitazioni Cyprianiche, circa il Battesimo degli Eretici; Roma, 1787. De Dissidio inter S. Stephanum et S. Cyprianum super baptismo hæret. exorto, Dissert. Dogmatica; Paris, 1724.

If this schism, which appears to have been soon extinguished, caused only a transient interruption of the peace of the Carthaginian Church, the division which arose about the same time at Rome, produced more formidable, because more lasting effects. The author of this division was Novatian, one of the chief of the priests in the Church of Rome. He united in an extraordinary manner many excellencies of character, and powerful talents, with great defects. He had received baptism in his bed during a dangerous sickness, and was on that account rendered, by the canons of the Church, incapable of entering into the ecclesiastical state: an exception, however, was made in his favour by the pope, probably the holy Fabian, and he was ordained priest. But he did not justify the good opinion that had been formed of him: for in the time of the persecution he seemed to waver, and gave scandal by a declaration which sounded much like a renunciation of the Christian faith. When the clergy proceeded to place some one in the long vacant chair of Peter, Novatian protested that he desired not to be raised to the episcopal dignity, and Cornelius was chosen by a majority of voices. He and Novatian had followed different opinions when in Rome; there had arisen a controversy as to the discipline which should be observed towards those who had fallen in the persecution. Novatian proposed severe, Cornelius advised milder, measures. In the meantime, the priest Novatus, the author of the dissensions at Carthage, arrived in Rome, and effected his designs of promoting in that city discord and confusion. He, who had been at Carthage the head of a party which admitted those, who had fallen, to the communion of the Church, without requiring that they should perform canonical penance, assumed in Rome the semblance of one most zealous for the utmost severity; and exerted himself, with a man named Evaristus, to procure the election of another bishop. Cornelius was represented as a Libellaticus, and as in communion with apostate bishops. Novatian suffered himself to be chosen the chief of their faction; he called three bishops from distant parts of

Italy, under the pretext that their presence was necessary in Rome to preserve the unity of the Church: he showed to them letters which he had received from several confessors who gave their voice for his consecration; and induced them by wicked artifices to impart to him, with a haste that was indecent, the episcopal ordination. One of the three bishops repented on the following day of this precipitate action. He sought and obtained pardon from Cornelius, but was admitted only to lay communion; the other two were deposed by the pope, who appointed other bishops to their sees. The confessors also, who, by their decision in favour of Novatian, had given to his cause a degree of authority, and an appearance of justice, lamented their proceedings, acknowledged Cornelius, and were restored to their rank of confessors of the faith. To impede the daily increasing defection of his adherents, Novatian hesitated not to profane the most sacred rites. At the distribution of the holy communion, he would seize the hands of the person to whom he had given the Eucharist, and thus address him: "Swear to me, by the body and blood of our Lord, which you now hold in your hands, that you will not desert me, and that you will never pass to the party of Cornelius!" The faithful could not, therefore, receive the Eucharist, until they had thus taken oath. Novatian endeavoured to procure, also, the approbation of other Churches, and for this purpose sent either letters or messengers to distant bishops. His emissaries arrived at Carthage during the celebration of the synod, held by St. Cyprian, but were not received, upon the representation of four African bishops, who, at the same time, returned from Rome, where, with fourteen others, they had been present at the election of Cornelius, and now bore testimony to the validity of the same, and to the innocence of the holy pope. The usurper was repulsed likewise by Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, who replied to his solicitations:—"If what you say be true, that you were elected against your will, prove now the sincerity of your repugnance, by a voluntary resignation: you will endure this sacri-



fice rather than suffer the Church of God to be torn by schism: for not less meritorious than martyrdom for the faith, is death for the unity of the Church." In some other parts the schism found acceptance, and several bishops became the adherents of Novatian.

The chief pretext with which Novatian sought to justify his opposition, was the practice of Cornelius in admitting to communion those who had denied their faith in the persecution, and the distinguishing doctrine of his party was, that those who had once offered sacrifice to the idols, or had been guilty of any grievous sin, could never be re-admitted into the Church, or be suffered to approach the Eucharistic table. The Novatians did not, indeed, as some have supposed, deprive such sinners of all hope of future happiness: they contended that the Church had not power to pardon their guilt: these unhappy men, they said, may be exhorted to repentance, but their confidence of remission can be placed only in the mercy of God. They restricted the power of binding and of loosing, which the apostles and their successors had received from Christ, to the pardon of sins in baptism: the power of the Church could not extend to grievous sins committed after the reception of that sacrament. Hence, the Fathers of the Church have accused Novatian, that he destroyed the canonical penances prescribed by the Church. As every error in faith is an abundant source, from which other false doctrines flow, the Novatians, after they had denied to the Church the power of pardoning sins, were led to maintain, that every Christian, who enters into any spiritual intercourse with another, guilty of sin, becomes a partaker in his crime, and defiles his own soul; so that the Church, which had received grievous sinners into its communion, had corrupted and profaned itself, and was no longer the Church of God, the spouse of Jesus Christ. Only they, the pure, (*Katharoi*), as they named themselves, constituted the true, Apostolical Church. They consequently would not admit the baptism of Catholics, and re-baptized all those who joined their party. This presumptuous claim of exclusive

sanctity, and the appearance of holy zeal, with which they cloaked their schism, deceived many, and in almost every part of the Roman empire there arose Novatian Churches, governed by their own bishops.\* This sect continued to exist after all others of the same period had died away, even as late as the seventh century, as it appears from the book written against them, in 590, by Eulogius, patriarch of Alexandria.

To induce the adherents of Novatian, and in particular those Roman confessors, who had attached themselves to him, to acknowledge the true pope, and to return again to the Church from which they had withdrawn themselves, St. Cyprian wrote, in 251, his book *On the Unity of the Church*. "The Church," he says, in this work, "is held together, your unity is supported and represented, by the chair of Peter. He, who shall separate himself from this chair, upon which the Church is founded, is no longer in the Church. There cannot be many Churches: but only many members of one Church, as from one sun many rays beam forth, from one trunk many branches ascend, and from one source flow many streams. But, as when the rays are separated from the sun, they are extinguished, as the branches, torn from the tree, wither, and as the streams cut from the fountain, become dry, so does the member, who has separated himself from the body of the Church, lose his life, the life of faith and love. He, therefore, who rebels against the Church, that has given him this life, by whose milk he was nurtured, and by whose spirit he was animated, rebels against his mother; and he who does not recognize the Church, the pure and unspotted spouse of Christ, as his mother, cannot have God as his father."

In this book, St. Cyprian gave expression to that

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\* They appear to have spread themselves especially in Phrygia, the chief seat of Montanism, with which the Novatian doctrines were closely allied. Hence it would seem that the Montanist prohibition of second marriages, which, according to the testimony of Socrates, v. 22, St. Epiphanius, St. Augustine and Theodoret attributed also to the Novatians, was peculiar to those who had settled in Phrygia.

opinion which he afterwards defended, that as there is only one Church, there can be only one baptism, which can be found only in the true Church, and that consequently, all that have been baptized out of this Church, must again receive the sacrament, when they forsake their heresy. This sentiment was by no means new: as early as the year 197, Agrippinus, a predecessor of St. Cyprian, had, in a synod of seventy African bishops, ordained, that those who came from any heretical sect to the Catholic Church, should be rebaptized, as the baptism given by heretics was invalid: soon after, Tertullian, in his book on baptism, asserted that heretics could not administer valid baptism, as they had not, in common with Catholics, one God, one Christ, or one baptism. That the baptism of heretics was of no avail, was the opinion in this age of many in the Churches of Cappadocia, Phrygia, Galatia, and Cilicia: hence two synods in Phrygia, of which one was held at Iconium in 230, the other a short time after at Synnada, commanded that all those who had been baptized by the Montanists (who professed the same doctrine on the Trinity, as that believed by Catholics) should be again baptized, upon their reception into the Church. When the Novatians separated themselves from the Church, the question was proposed in Africa, whether their baptism should be considered as invalid, although they were then not heretics, but only schismatics. To this question, St. Cyprian replied in the affirmative, adhering to his opinion, that out of the true Church, there can be no baptism, and that the reason why the baptism of heretics was to be rejected, was not so much on account of their false doctrines as of their separation from the Church. But as the question was of great importance, and as many of the Numidian bishops were in doubt, two synods were assembled, in the years 255 and 256, over which St. Cyprian presided, and in which the subject was discussed. Both decreed, that true baptism existed only in the Catholic Church, and consequently, that baptism administered out of that Church was of no effect. The ground upon which this decree



was based, and of which St. Cyprian speaks in his epistles, was "that heretics by their benedictions cannot sanctify or purify the water destined for baptism. As the remission of the sins of the catechumen is effected in the true Church by baptism, you must, if you allow the validity of baptism conferred by heretics, either change the question proposed to the catechumen, 'do you believe in eternal life and the remission of sins by the holy Church?' or you must acknowledge heretical, (and schismatical) sects to be the true Church of Christ. Heretics have neither Church nor altar; there can therefore be with them none of those things which accompany Catholic baptism; they cannot impart to the person baptized the holy unction, the symbol of spiritual anointing, and which is performed with oil solemnly consecrated at the altar: they cannot give to him the body of the Lord, for their offering and consecration are as ineffectual as their baptism. He who, by his separation from the Church, has lost the Holy Ghost, cannot be the instrument of the sanctification of souls, which is effected by the operation of the Holy Spirit. The conferring of baptism, and the imparting of the Holy Ghost, must accompany each other: they cannot be separated: as heretics cannot impart the Holy Ghost, so neither can they administer baptism. With them, every thing is empty, useless and profane: how can God assent to that which is done by his enemies? How can the adversaries of Christ bestow the grace of Christ? Whoever, therefore, shall pass from any sect to the unity of the Church, must be incorporated into this unity, and be numbered among the faithful, by baptism."

St. Cyprian wrote in the name of the second synod to the pope, St. Stephen, requesting him to sanction their decree. The African prelates well knew that in many Churches, and particularly in the Church of Rome, the contrary custom prevailed, and therefore St. Cyprian, in his synodical epistle, declared that the African bishops wished not to enforce their decree upon others, but that every bishop was free in the government of his own Church. The pope rejected their

decree, and appealing to his authority as successor of the prince of the apostles, declared that all should adhere to the ancient custom of the Roman and of so many Churches that agreed with it; that baptism should not be again administered to those who returned from heresy to the Church; but that hands should be imposed upon him in penance, and in reconciliation to the Church.\* We are acquainted with this sentence of the pontiff, only by means of the fragments which have been preserved by St. Cyprian and Firmilian: by the first in his severe and harsh letter to Pompeius; and by the second in his bitter and passionate answer to St.

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\* "Si quis ergo a quacunque hæresi venerit ad nos, nihil innovetur; nisi quod traditum est, ut manus illi imponatur in pœnitentiam." This expression, "*nihil innovetur*," is opposed to those words in the African decree, "*Baptizandus est et innovandus qui ad ecclesiam rudis venit, ut intus per sanctos sanctificetur*." Cypr. Epist. 70. The words of the pope, as they are cited by St. Cyprian, would seem to express that St. Stephen considered as valid the baptism of all heretics, even of those who did not baptize according to the form prescribed by the gospel; and in his severe epistle to Pompeius, St. Cyprian directly imputes this error to the pope. "A quacunque hæresi venientem baptizari in ecclesia vetuit, id est, omnium hæreticorum baptizmata justa esse ac legitima judicavit." St. Cyprian might have been confirmed in this idea by a letter (perhaps of St. Stephen) a copy of which was sent to him by Jubajanus, in which it is said, that the baptism even of the Marcionites, whose doctrine of the Trinity differed widely from the Catholic doctrine, was to be received as valid. It is however certain, that St. Stephen drew the just distinction, and admitted not the baptism of those heretics who introduced any essential changes into the form or administration of baptism, and especially of those sects who did not use the words commanded by Christ. If we cannot discover this in the controversy of St. Cyprian, we can easily learn it by citing the words of Firmilian, "*Illud quoque*," says the Bishop of Cæsarea, "*absurdum, quod non putant quærendum esse, quis sit ille qui baptizaverit, eo quod qui baptizatus sit, gratiam consequi poterit invocata Trinitate nominum, Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti*." To reduce the pope to difficulties, he then adduces the example of a possessed, false prophetess, who had baptized, using the entire form and words employed by the Church; and he asks, "*Numquid et hoc Stephanus, et qui illi consentiant, comprobant, maxime cui nec symbolum Trinitatis nec interrogatio legitima et ecclesiastica defuit*." Later writers, such as St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Vincent of Lerrins, and Facundus, all agree that St. Stephen opposed himself only to the error prevailing at his time, which regarded the faith of the minister of the sacrament, not the change of the matter, or the mutilation of the form.

Stephen addressed to St. Cyprian. Both endeavour to place the opinions of the Pope in the most unfavourable light ; but the reasons which guided him in forming his decision, could not have been unknown. He began with this fundamental doctrine, that the validity and sanctity of baptism do not depend on the faith or sanctity of the minister, but upon the holiness and presence of Christ, upon the invocation of the names of the three Divine persons : you need not therefore, he argued, ask where or by whom a man has been baptized : it is Christ who baptizes, who can employ a heretic as his instrument. The pope, according to the remark of St. Augustine,\* institutes the distinction, denied by the bishop of Carthage, between the sacrament and the effects produced by the sacrament. The latter, which in baptism are justification and the remission of sins, depend on the faith, not of the person baptizing, but of the person baptized. Should any one therefore be baptized in a heresy or in a schismatical sect, he is indeed, baptized ; but his heresy or his schism would prevent the full effects of the sacrament ; he would not be made a partaker of the graces annexed to it. When therefore such an one shall forsake his heresy or schism. and, with a sincere confession of the truth, shall enter the Catholic Church, it is not necessary to repeat his baptism, for the hitherto confined effects of the sacrament flow in upon him ; for by his true faith and his repentance, he receives Divine grace and justification. But should one of the faithful find himself in danger of death, and in the absence of a Catholic priest, receive baptism from the hands of a heretic, he would receive the sacrament with all its sanctifying effects and graces.†

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\* August. de Bapt. contra Donat. Lib. vi. c. 1 ; Tom. ix. p. 107, ed. Amstelod.

† The ancient doctrine of the Church, which St. Stephen has here briefly but correctly stated, was afterwards more fully developed and defended by St. Augustine, against the Donatists, who endeavoured to justify their errors by the authority of St. Cyprian. It has been said by Von Drey, in his "*Neue Untersuchungen über die Konstitutionen und Kanones der Apostel*," (Tubingen, 1832, s. 263) that St. Augustine was



St. Cyprian, as soon as he received the reply of the bishop of Rome, called a third council at Carthage, at which eighty-five bishops were present. The pope had threatened to excommunicate the African bishops, if they did not recede from their former decree, and St. Cyprian now, addressing the assembled members of the council and asking their opinions, suffered to escape from him a concealed indeed, but bitter complaint against this menace of the pontiff. "While we spoke our own sentiments," he said, "we wished not to judge

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the author of the *Theologumena* or *Theological Arguments*, proving the validity of baptism administered by heretics. This is not correct. St. Augustine has done no more than arrange in order, doctrines always taught by the Church, defend them by arguments drawn from the Sacred Scriptures and from the nature of the sacrament, and remove the objections of St. Cyprian. In the letter, of which, as we have said, a copy was sent to St. Cyprian, by Jubajanus, we read these words : "Quod non sit quærendum quis baptizaverit, quando is qui baptizatus sit, accipere remissionem peccatorum potuerit, secundum quod credidit." The arguments of St. Augustine in defence of this doctrine may be reduced to the following.—1. Baptism belongs to Christ : it is administered in his name, not in the name of man : the same baptism is therefore conferred by heretics and Catholics, provided they confer it in the name and according to the command of him who is the author of the sacrament. Thus the seal of a prince is the same, whether the impression be made by a stranger or by a subject.—2. Heretics and schismatics are not so entirely separated from the Church, as not to be united to it by some bands : when they administer baptism with the intention, and according to the rites of the Church, they therein belong to the unity of the Church, and he who has thus received baptism from them, is incorporated with the Church : he belongs to their sect, not by virtue of the sacrament received from them, but by adhering to their false doctrines. Does he renounce these errors ? Then the wall of separation which had divided him, a member of the Church by baptism, from the Church, falls down. He needs not to be received into the Church, but is in a state analogous to that of public penitents ; on which account, at their conversion, those who come from heresy receive the imposition of hands in penance, according to the ancient custom mentioned by St. Stephen.—3. It is indeed true, as the adversaries assert, that sects divided from the Church, either by heresy or schism, are unfruitful : they are not in a condition to bring forth spiritual children to God : the Church alone is fruitful, and baptism, by which she is the spiritual mother of the faithful, belongs only to her : but it does not thence follow, that baptism administered in separated societies is invalid, for heretics have borrowed or taken with them the sacraments from the Church ; and it is by this union with the Church, not by their separation, that they validly confer the sacrament.

others, nor did we threaten to expel others, whatever their opinions might have been, from the communion of the Church. No one of us seeks to become the bishop of bishops, nor to reduce his companions in office to subjection by tyrannical intimidation, for every bishop, in virtue of his dignity, possesses free power, and can be as little judged by others, as he himself can judge. We acknowledge only one judge over us, our Lord, Jesus Christ." In his ardour, the bishop of Carthage forgot, that he had himself, a short time before, expressed other sentiments, in the case of Marcian, bishop of Arles, and of the Spanish bishops, Basilides and Martial; and he, who had recently written so eloquently on the unity of the Church, now claimed for every individual bishop an independance, that would not have left even the shadow of unity remaining. The bishops who had met in synod, declared it to be their unanimous opinion, that all those who had been baptized by heretics, should be again baptized when returning to the Church: but many of them, after the example of St. Cyprian, added to their declaration, that they would not retire from the communion of those who held the contrary doctrine.

Ambassadors were again sent to Rome to lay the decree of the synod before the pope. But it is probable, that the pope now executed his threat, and excommunicated all those that had co-operated in framing this decree; for thus only can we explain his conduct towards the ambassadors, whom he not only refused to see, but also forbade the Christians of Rome to receive them. He proceeded with equal severity towards the bishops of the east: he declared that he would excommunicate the bishops of Cilicia, Cappadocia, Galatia, and of the neighbouring provinces; namely, Helenus of Tarsus, and Firmilian of Cæsarea, if they should presume to rebaptize. They, however, remained as obstinate in their ideas as the bishops of Africa; and the epistle of Firmilian, addressed to St. Cyprian, in defence of their common cause, exceeds in vehemence and bitterness, all that had been said or written by the

latter against the pope.\* “As Stephen,” he says, “has separated others from himself, he has separated himself from all others, and from the unity of ecclesiastical communion.” Although Firmilian repudiated as erroneous the usage of the Roman Church, he nevertheless thought with St. Cyprian, that despite this variation, the unity of the Church could and ought to continue, as when different Churches followed different customs on other subjects, such as the time of the celebration of the paschal solemnity. But when with repeated emphasis, he insisted that the baptism of heretics was invalid, he entangled himself in the contradiction, that on the one side, he insisted upon the necessity of a general unanimity of all Churches, on a question of so great importance, whilst on the other—well knowing at the same time, that the great majority of the Churches were opposed to him—he required that each bishop and each community, should be suffered to retain unmolested the practice that had hitherto prevailed amongst them.

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\* This long epistle of Firmilian exists only in the Latin translation, the style of which bears so strong a resemblance to the writings of St. Cyprian, that we may safely attribute the version to him. The genuineness of this letter has been frequently and warmly disputed, first by Christof. Lupus, and about the same time by the Jesuit Tournemine, and the Franciscan Raymund Misori. The last-named, in his work “In duas celeberrimas Epistolas SS. Firmiliani et Cypriani adv. Decr. S. Stephani P. Disputationes criticæ,” Venet. 1733-4, rejected as spurious, not only the letter of Firmilian, but that also of St. Cyprian to Pompeius, the other epistles which treat of the baptism of heretics, and the acts of the third council of Carthage. All these writings he attributes to the Donatists, who sought to support by them their own errors on the same subject: he treats in like manner the narration given by Eusebius on this controversy. He was led to this opinion by the words of St. Augustine, in his epistle Ad Vincent. Rogat.: “Quamquam non desint qui hoc Cyprianum prorsus non sensisse contendant, sed sub ejus nomine a præsumptoribus atque mendacibus fuisse confictum.” But St. Augustine himself was far from participating in this supposition, and the grounds of Missori’s system are so weak and untenable, that his adversaries, Sbaraglia in Italy, and Preu and Cotta in Germany, found little trouble in confuting him. Since their days, however, Steph. Ant. Morcelli, generally a most judicious writer, in his *Africa Christiana*, has adopted the opinion of Missori with regard to the letter of Firmilian and of St. Cyprian to Pompeius.



Dionysius of Alexandria, whose sentiments on this subject, are not distinctly known, laboured to preserve the peace of the Church, and besought the pope not to strike with excommunication so many bishops, on account of their defence of one opinion—an opinion that had been adopted by the synods of Iconium and Synnada. St. Stephen died in 257, during the persecution of Valerian : his successor, Xystus, sent conciliatory letters to the African Churches, as also to the bishops of Cappadocia, Galatia and Celicia; from which time we perceive no further traces of an interruption of ecclesiastical communion.

When St. Stephen decreed that baptism, conferred by heretics, was not on that account invalid, there were opposed to him only the Churches of Africa and those provinces of Asia Minor that adhered to the synods of Iconium and Synnada. The greater number of Churches asserted the same doctrine, and followed the same practice, as that inculcated by the pope ; and Eusebius, who may be received as a witness for the Churches, at least, of Syria and Palestine, says (vii. 2) that it has been the practice from antiquity to receive those who returned from an heretical sect only by the imposition of hands in prayer. St. Cyprian himself knew that the usage which he so vehemently defended, was first introduced into Africa in the time of Agrippinus. Firmilian, on the contrary, maintained, that in his province, the time was not known when the practice commenced of rebaptizing those who had been baptized by heretics. But it is asked, did not that which was practised at first only by those heretics, who changed the essence of baptism, extend itself in the third century to all without distinction ? St. Stephen, as it has been before remarked, asserted, that baptism was not necessarily invalid because it had been administered out of the Church, and that in whatever heresy it were conferred, it was valid, provided that the matter and form prescribed by the gospel were employed. In this opinion he was not followed by the oriental Churches. They taught that the baptism of those heretics who differed from the Church in their belief of the Trinity, was

not to be admitted. Nearly all the heretics of the third and fourth centuries erred in their doctrines of this article of our faith, and therefore St. Cyril of Jerusalem declared in general terms, that the baptism of heretics was of no avail. St. Basil, and with him we may associate St. Athanasius, taught that the baptism of those sects, that had preserved their faith in the sacred Trinity, such as the Novatians and the Hydroparastates, should be considered as valid.\* The synod of Nice ordained that the Paulian heretics should be rebaptized before they could be received into the Church: by these heretics, the synod understood not only the disciples of Paul of Samosata, but all the sects of the Antitrinitarians.† From this it will appear, that in the fourth century the prevailing opinion in the east was, that although these heretics might invoke the names of the three Divine Persons in their baptism, yet that by their heresy they gave to this invocation a signification, which deprived the sacrament of its effects. Proceeding upon this principle, the council of Constantinople, in 381, in its seventh canon, divided the various sects of heretics into two classes; in the one it enumerated the Arians, the Macedonians, the Novatians, the Quartodecimans, and the Apollinarists: those who had been baptized by any one of these sects, could not be baptized again. In the other class of heretics, whose baptism it rejected, the council ranged the Eunomians, the Montanists,‡ the

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\* Cyrill. Procatech. n. 7. Basil. epist. ad Amphilocho, n. 1. p. 268, 269. Athan. Or. ii. contra Arianos, n. 42-43. From this declaration of St. Basil, who was successor of Firmilian, it is evident that in his time the decree of the synods of Iconium and Synnada, (from which it is probable that the 46th and 47th of the Apostolical canons were drawn,) was no longer in force, even in Cappadocia. The sects, whose baptism St. Basil says could not be received, were the Manichees, the Valentinians, the Marcionites, and the Pepuzenians, a sect of degenerate Montanists, "because they erred essentially in their belief in God."

† The Synod of Laodicea, in 372, acknowledged, however, the baptism of the Photinians, whose faith in the Trinity substantially varied from the Catholic doctrine. It would appear, then, that in the application of their principle to particular heresies, there existed an uncertainty and a variation among the oriental Churches.

‡ The later Montanists must have departed far from the doctrines of

Sabellians, and other sects still further removed from the orthodox tenets of the Church.\* In the west, the council of Arles, in 314, decreed, in reference to the African Churches, which continued to rebaptize those who had received baptism from heretics, that such baptism should be esteemed valid, if in the administration the names of the persons in the Trinity had been employed; and that all converts, who had been thus baptized, should be admitted into the Church by the imposition of hands for the reception of the Holy Spirit.

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the primitive founders of their sect, and have introduced a change into the form of baptism. For not only in the east were they admitted into the Church by baptism, according to the decree of the eighth canon of the council of Laodicea; but in the west also, as St. Gregory the Great testifies, (Lib. iv. Ep. 61), "because they did not receive baptism in the name of the Trinity."

\* Beveridge has shown that this canon probably does not belong to the council of Constantinople, but to an epistle addressed, in 450, to Martyrius, Patriarch of Antioch. However this may be, it proves to us the opinions of the oriental Churches in that age.

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## CHAPTER THE THIRD.

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### SECTION I.

#### CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH.

**DISTINCTION BETWEEN CLERGY AND PEOPLE : FORMATION OF DIOCESES : THE BISHOPS, SUCCESSORS OF THE APOSTLES.—PRIESTS : THEIR RELATION TO THE BISHOPS.\***

THE Christian religion was destined, from its commencement, to subdue the whole human race by the triumphing power of its spirit ; to form individuals as well as nations in their institutions and mutual relations ; and thus to bring forth a new creation and a new history. As it was therefore to operate as the most mighty of social powers on earth, it must necessarily have possessed a body, a firm and lasting social form : its constitution must have been decreed from the period of its origin, and its elements were left for a future and determined developement. Our Lord Jesus Christ could not have given the formation of this constitution to chance, or to the caprice of individuals, for it would then have been no more than the work of man, and as such, without a high sanction, without the dignity of sovereign authority, it would have borne within it the

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\* D. Petavius, *De Eccles. Hierarchia*, lib. v. and *Dissert. Eccl.* lib. ii. in his work, *De Theolog. Dogmat.* Antwerp, 1700. Tom iv. ; L. Thomassinus, *Vetus et Nova Eccl. Disciplina circa Beneficia et Beneficiarios*, Lucæ, 1728, 3 vols. fol. ; P. De Marca, *de Concordia Sacerdotii et Imperii*, cum ejusdem *Dissert. Eccl. et Carmini Firmiani Adnotationibus*, Bamberg, 1788, 6 vols. 4to. ; L. E. Dupin, *Dissert. de Antiqua Ecclesiæ Disciplina*, Colon. 1691, 4to. ; Gian. Ant. Bianchi, *della Potestà e Polizia della Chiesa*, Roma, 1745, 6 vols. 4to. ; H. Scholliner, *de Hierarchia Eccles. Cath.* *Dissertatt. Theol. Hist.* Ratisb. 1757, 4to. ; H. Hammond, *Dissert. IV. de Episcopis et Presbyteris*, 1651, 4to.

seeds of its own dissolution; it would have been exposed to the destroying influence of time, and have been surrendered as a prey to the varying passions of men. If the Church, which is the body, the vessel of the spirit, the organ of the divine doctrines and graces, had been thus subjected, the Christian religion, as a power operating, on earth, amongst men, would have been destroyed in its ruins; as in man, who is formed of body and soul, the dissolution of the former brings with it his death, or the termination of his earthly, temporal, existence.

To lay the foundations of the constitution of the Church, it was necessary only to unfold, and to form in order, the elements of hierarchy, which were contained in the Old Testaments. For as the gospel of Christ did not enter the world as a doctrine entirely distinct from all others, which another dispensation had not preceded, to prepare for it the way, but was only the fulfilment, the perfection of doctrines taught, and prefiguring it in the ancient covenant, so the form and figure of the Church of Christ was developed from the forms of the Church of the Jews. It is thus, that, according to the words of Christ, the old law was fulfilled by the new, that is, was conducted to its destination. The typical and the symbolical gave way to the reality: the confined and carnal order of the ancient Church passed into the freedom of the spiritual order of the new; and the Levitical priesthood, which was confined to one tribe, and was united with birth according to the flesh, was changed into the priesthood of the gospel, in which all who had been born by a spiritual birth, and had received the Holy Ghost by the imposition of the hands of the apostles, or of their successors, might be enrolled. In this also was manifested the peculiar efficacy of the Christian religion, by which all things in civil, as in religious life, were not only not destroyed, but purified, ennobled, and spiritualized.

A threefold power was invested in the priests of the old law,—the power of preserving and explaining the doctrines of the law, a liturgical power, and a power of

governing. In the Church of the new covenant, these three powers were united, at first, in the person of its founder. Christ was the one and the only teacher, the high-priest and sovereign of his forming Church. But he selected to himself twelve men from amongst his disciples, to whom he imparted the mission which he had received, and the triple, the prophetic, the sacerdotal, and the regal, power, by which that mission was accompanied. And when the days of his earthly sojourning were approaching to their close, he first conferred upon these his apostles the sacerdotal power, at his last supper, and added to it, after his resurrection, the power of forgiving sins. That this mission was a continuation of his own, and a transferring of his own dignity, he showed when he spoke these words:—"As my Father hath sent me, so I also send you;" and again, when he sent down upon them the Holy Ghost, which had descended upon him at his entrance upon his ministry. Finally, before his ascension, he completed and sealed the commission and powers which he had bestowed on his apostles, when, in virtue of that power which is given to him in Heaven and on earth, he commanded them to go to preach the gospel to all nations, and to conduct those, who should believe, into his Church by the sacrament of baptism. With this mission, and this grant of authority, he united the promise, "that he would be with them even unto the end of the world," by which he declared that the apostles, or rather the apostleship, should continue to exist in an unbroken succession of teachers, priests, and rulers, unto the end of time; that the ministry of his word, the dispensation of his sacraments, and the power of his Church, should never fail; that there should exist for ever a visible Church, in which he would continue to reside, in which his doctrines should be preserved and taught, pure as he had delivered them; in which the means of sanctification and salvation should ever be found; in which all things that he had commanded should be faithfully observed.

Hence the apostles and their successors were appointed to be the heralds and the organs of the doc-



trines of Christ, the priests and “dispensers of the mysteries of God,” the pastors and guides of the faithful. Their power and authority were given to them for the preservation and extension of the divine deposit that had been confided to them, and for the service of their flocks, as the Lord signified, when he said, “he that is placed over many, becomes the servant of many.” The obedience, therefore, of the subject, which is due to this authority, is an obedience founded in love, exalted by faith and confidence; and the Christian, who submits himself to him who has power in the Church, learns thereby his own true freedom, for he obeys him who is called by God to govern him, he bows before an authority which has come down from on high, not constituted by the fancy or the passions of men.

As in the old law there was a distinction between the priesthood and the multitude of the people, so in the new covenant we observe from the beginning a separation between the clergy and the laity. Cleros (Κληρος), was the name given to the portion assigned to a person in a distribution by lot. The Levites, who, in the division of Canaan amongst the twelve tribes, received no part of the land, were to consider the Lord as their portion and inheritance. In the same manner, those who had dedicated themselves to serve the Church, and, consequently, to serve Christ, were named *Clerics*, for the Lord had become their portion, and they the portion of the Lord, having been separated and chosen by Him for the service of the faithful.\* The entrance into the Church was in fact a separation from the people, and was expressed by the imposition of the hands of the apostles or of the bishops. In this sense, St. Paul says, (Rom. i. 1), “that he is *separated* for the gospel of God;” and in the Acts of the Apostles (xiii. 2), there is a command of the Holy Ghost, “separate to me Paul and Barnabas for the work to which I have called them.” Persons were received into the order of clerics only by

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\* Thus writes St. Jerome, in his epistle to Nepotian: “Vocantur clerici, vel quia de sorte sunt Domini, vel quia ipse Dominus sors, id est, pars clericorum est.”

this dedication and separation from the people; and he who was once received, was bound to his state, and we know of no example of a cleric returning entirely to the people, or of one who had been expelled from his class, or deprived of his priestly powers, being restored again by a second ordination.

That in the times of the apostles, the faithful connected this distinction of priests and people, with the distinction formed in the Mosaic Law, and derived the one from the other, is shown from a passage in the writings of St. Clement of Rome: "To the high-priest are assigned the functions of the service of God; the priests have their peculiar place, and to the Levites their ministry is assigned. Every one of you, my brethren, take part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, in the order prescribed to you, that you may not pass your just bounds in the service of the Church."\* St. Clement here compared the various grades of the Jewish, to those of the Christian, hierarchy,—to the bishop, the priests, the deacons, and the people,—and his intent therein was to prove to the Corinthians, who had revolted against their ecclesiastical superiors, how necessary it was, for good order, that all classes should confine themselves to the spheres assigned to them. Clement of Alexandria uses the same word, *cleros*, when he relates, that the apostle St. John, during his travels in Asia, received among the clerics those whom the Holy Ghost made known to him.

And yet the holy Scriptures and the Church ascribe the sacerdotal character to all Christians: this universal priesthood of all Christians stands in the same relation to the peculiar and especial priesthood of the New Testament, as the sacrifice, so called in a wide and general sense, the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, of prayer and good works, stands to the one, true sacrifice of the

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\* Έκαστος υμων, ἀδελφοι, ἐν τῇ ἰδίῳ ταγματι ευχαριστεῖτω Θεῷ. The entire context, the word, *λειτουργία*, which follows, and the allusion to the sacrifices of Jerusalem, prove that St. Clement is speaking of a participation in the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice. It is probable that contentions had arisen on this subject, to allay which this letter was written.

Eucharist. Even in the old law, which had the priesthood of Aaron, instituted by God himself, the priestly dignity was given to the whole people ; and as St. Peter calls the faithful a holy and a royal priesthood, who presented, through Jesus Christ, a sacrifice pleasing to the Lord, so God had, ages before him, spoken by Moses to the children of Israel, “ You shall be to me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation,” (Exod. xix. 6) words which St. Peter seems to have had before him, when he wrote. To this royal priesthood of all Christians, were the anointings employed in baptism referred, by which the faithful were reminded of their high dignity ; as in the ancient covenant we read, that the sacerdotal, as well as the regal authority, was imparted by anointing.\*

This general priesthood of the faithful, had reference also to the unbloody sacrifice of the altar, for although the consecration was performed, and could be performed, only by the true priest, yet the whole community, and especially the congregation assembled at the celebration of the sacrifice, united with the priest to present the sacrifice to God.† In as far, therefore, as every Christian in conjunction with his brethren, offered up Christ to his heavenly Father, he was, in the general signification of the word, a priest. Hence, came the practice in the primitive Church, by which the faithful took the bread, consecrated by the bishop, from the assembly, and preserved it in their dwellings,

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\* See Constit. Apost. iii. 15. “ την κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς (the woman to be baptized), χρῖσει ὁ ἐπίσκοπος· ὃν τρόπον οἱ ἱερεῖς καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς το προτερον εχρῖοντο· ουχ’ ὅτι οἱ νυν βαπτίζομενοι ἱερεῖς χειροτονονται, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἀπο τοῦ Χριστοῦ χριστιανοί, βασιλειον ἱερατεῦμα καὶ ἔθνος ἅγιον.” Here the real, and properly so called, priesthood, which was not given by this anointing, is distinguished from that general priesthood, which the author of the constitution has designated in the words of St. Peter. In this signification, St. Jerome calls baptism the priesthood of the people. Compare also, Augustine, De Civ. Dei, xx. 10.

† Thus in our Liturgy, it is said, “ Memento Domine . . . omnium circumstantium, pro quibus tibi offerimus vel *qui tibi offerunt hoc sacrificium laudis.*” And again, “ Hanc igitur oblationem servitutis nostræ *sed et cunctæ familiæ tuæ*, quæsumus Domine ut placatus accipias.”



and as in the times of persecution, it was impossible for them to meet, for many days together, to offer the holy sacrifice, they were careful to partake of the body of the Lord at home. The father of the family first presented the sacred bread to God, received a part, and then divided the remainder amongst his household. In this also, the laic in a certain sense executed the function of a priest, and by this is explained the celebrated and often contested passage of Tertullian,—“ We are in error, if we imagine, that what is permitted to the priest, is not permitted also to the laic. Are not we laymen priests? It is written (Apoc. i. 6), ‘ He hath made us a kingdom and priests to God and his Father.’ The distinction between the priests and the people, was formed by the authority of the community, and by the honour which God has sanctified by the college of the priests. Where there is no college of priests, thou offerest, thou baptizest, and art a priest for thyself. But where there are three, there is a Church, although those three be only laics, for every one ‘ liveth by his faith,’ and ‘ with God there is no acceptance of persons.’ For ‘ not the hearers of the law, shall be justified by God, but the doers,’ as the apostle says. If, therefore, thou hast the power of priest in thee when it is necessary, thou shouldst follow the life of a priest. Dost thou, who hast been twice married, baptize? Dost thou offer? How much more is it a grievous offence in a laic, who has been twice married, to act as a priest, when it is not allowed to a priest, who has been twice married, to act in his office? But thou sayest, ‘ necessity can be pardoned.’ No necessity is excused, when it may be avoided. Do not, therefore, be found as one twice married; that thou mayest not commit that which is not lawful in that state. God requires that we should all be so disposed, that we may be always ready to administer his sacraments.”\*

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\* “*Differentiam inter ordinem et plebem constituit Ecclesiæ autoritas, et honor per ordinis consessum sanctificatus a Deo. Ubi ecclesiastici ordinis non est consessus, et offers et tinguis, sacerdos tibi solus. Sed ubi tres, Ecclesia est, licet laici, unusquisque enim, ‘ de sua fide vivit,’*”

Tertullian, who, as a Montanist, forbade second marriages, endeavours in this passage to meet the objection

nec est 'personarum acceptio apud Deum.' Quoniam 'non auditores legis justificabuntur a Deo, sed factores,' secundum quod et apostolus dicit. Igitur si habes jus sacerdotis in temetipso ubi necesse est, habes oportet etiam disciplinam sacerdotis ubi necesse sit habere jus sacerdotis. Digamus tinguis? Digamus offers? Quanto magis laico digamo capitale est agere pro sacerdote, quum ipsi sacerdoti digamo facto auferatur agere sacerdotem? Sed necessitati, inquis, indulgetur. Nulla necessitas excusatur, quæ potest non esse. Noli denique digamus deprehendi, et non committis in necessitatem administrandi quod non licet digamo. Omnes nos Deus ita vult dispositos esse, ut ubique sacramentis ejus obeundis apti simus."—De Exhort. Cast. c. vii.—To understand this very obscure, and variously interpreted passage, we must remark, that the "authority of the community" (ecclesiæ autoritas) is the right of the community in the election of the clergy. The dignity of the priest depended in part upon the choice of the people; and therefore Tertullian inferred, that they who elect priests, must possess a priestly power. The "honour, which God has sanctified," (honor, a Deo sanctificatus) is the dignity, the mission, the power of priests or bishops. The word is often employed by St. Cyprian, a disciple of Tertullian, in this sense. "Oportet diaconum *honorem* sacerdotis agnoscere." "Fungeris circa eum potestate *honoris tui*, ut eum vel deponas, vel abstineas." (Ep. iii.) This "honor sanctificatus a Deo, per ordinis consessum," is the ordination by the bishop in the presence, and with the assistance, (by the imposition of the hands) of the priests. Tertullian here enumerates three things, which concurred in the receiving of the priesthood—the election of the people, the ratification by ordination of the bishop, and the sanctification from God. St. Cyprian speaks in the same manner of the election and dedication of ecclesiastics: "Nemo post divinum iudicium, post populi suffragium, post coepiscoporum consensum," &c. Dr. Neander, who in his *Antignosticus*, p. 243, makes Tertullian say, "Only the authority of the Church has instituted the distinction between priests and people," must have overlooked, in his translation, the words that immediately follow, to have made this ancient writer express an opinion so contrary to his thoughts. That a laic should baptize in a case of necessity, or should distribute the holy eucharist, which he had brought with him from the Church, it was sufficient, according to Tertullian, that three persons should meet; for God, who considers not their persons, whether they be priests or bishops, is with them and hears them. It is evident, that Tertullian is speaking of a practice, which was in those days of frequent occurrence; but it cannot be thought that by the word "offer" he understands the consecration of the Eucharist, or that he claimed for a laic the power of celebrating the sacrifice in the manner that priests were accustomed to celebrate, as it has been frequently asserted since the time of Grotius. In the whole of Christian antiquity, it is impossible to find an example of sacrifice thus offered by a laic. Why should the priests (see the fifth epistle of St. Cyprian) have exposed themselves by entering into dungeons, to celebrate the holy sacrifice for the imprisoned Christians, if laics themselves could



of those who contended, that the precept of the apostle (1 Timothy, iii. 2, 12) affected only the clergy, and that consequently these marriages were permitted to the laity. He argues : every Christian must consider himself as a priest ; and is bound, therefore, to observe the obligations of a priest ; for he sometimes is necessitated to perform sacerdotal functions, as when in the time of persecution he baptizes, when he offers to God the holy eucharist which he has preserved in his house, of which

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offer it in a case of necessity ? With how many tears did those, who had fallen, supplicate to be admitted to the holy communion, not one of whom had in the meantime thought of consecrating the holy eucharist. How far Tertullian was from the idea that laics could perform all the functions of the priesthood, is clearly shown by these words, with which he reproves those heretics who “ imposed sacerdotal duties upon laics” (*sacerdotalia munera laicis injungant*). *De Præscr. c. xli.* ; and that he drew the precise distinction between those functions which could be performed by a laic, and those which only a priest could fulfil, is evident from another place in his works, which will serve to illustrate the passage now under discussion. “ It is not permitted to a woman to speak in the Church, to teach, to baptize, nor to offer, nor to assume the right of performing the duties confined to men, much less the duties of the priestly office.” (“ Non permittitur mulieri in Ecclesia loqui, sed nec docere, nec tingere, nec offerre, nec ullius virilis muneris, nedum sacerdotalis officii sortem sibi vindicare.”) *De Virg. Veland. c. ix.* Here he distinguishes the *munera virilia* from the *officia sacerdotalia*, the former were permitted to laics, the latter only to priests. When he numbers “*offerre*” among the *munera virilia*, it is clear, that he does not thereby understand the consecration of the eucharist. If after this explanation, it should be objected, that the argument of Tertullian is of no force, as there must exist an essential difference between the clergy and the laity, which distinction he seems to exclude, he who makes this objection, must remember that in the writings of Tertullian there are many passages which possess a rhetorical appearance, but which are weak and without foundation. We find an argument of this kind, in his work, *De Monogamia, c. vii.* ; in which, from the spiritual brotherhood of all Christians, he tells a widow, that it is not lawful for her to marry again, as she would marry the brother of her deceased husband, for we are all brothers : “ Ergo non nubet defuncto viro uxor, fratri utique (viri sui) nuptura, si nupserit : omnes enim nos fratres sumus.” It appears, that at this time, many of the laity, presuming upon their universal priesthood, had rebelled against the clergy. Tertullian himself, in the same work, (*De Monogam. c. xii.*) accuses them of pride and extravagance : “ Sed cum extollimur et inflamur adversus clerum, tunc unum omnes sumus, tunc omnes sacerdotes, quia ‘ sacerdotes nos Deo et patri fecit,’ quum ad peræquationem disciplinæ sacerdotalis provocamur, deponimus infulas, et impares sumus.”



he partakes, and which he administers to his family. The distinction between the clergy and the people is not, he continues, grounded upon this, that only the former are empowered to fulfil all the duties of the priesthood, whilst the laity are entirely excluded from them : but upon this, that by the election of the community, by the sanction and imposition of the hands of the bishop and other priests, and by the accompanying grace and sanctification, priests are taken from the body of the people, and made the ordinary dispensers of the sacraments.

The clergy of the different Churches were not an aggregate of persons, equal in right and power : they formed an organic, united whole, a body consisting of a head, and the different members. This head, which presided over each distinct Church, as the head Supreme ruled the universal Church, was the Bishop. He was the representative of that unity which is a constituent attribute of the Church—the point on and around which, the members, clergy and people, moved in a communion of faith and of love. As the bishops were successors of the apostles, and the episcopacy a continuation of the apostleship, so the plenitude of the power possessed by the apostles, passed to these their successors, the bishops. Our Saviour Christ delivered to his chosen twelve the mission that he had received from his Father, and thereby confided to them the entire government of his spiritual kingdom. All were subjected to their authority : they acted as supreme rulers : they ordained, directed and determined all things that appertained to the internal and external existence of the Church. But this power of the apostles was not a transient, personal power, which at their death became extinct : inheritors of their dignity followed them ; they died only as men ; as apostles they survived and now survive in their successors. Persons, the bearers and organs of the apostolical dignity, might change, but they still formed that uninterrupted succession, with which Jesus Christ promised to abide to the end of the world. The bishops, therefore, entered into the office, and

received the authority of the apostles : they also became the representatives of Christ, in his threefold relation to men,—his instruments in his ministry of preaching, of his power in the Church, and of his high-priesthood. The authority of the bishops was not, indeed, in every respect, the same as that of the apostles : the jurisdiction of the apostles was not confined to place, to the limits of a particular diocese, but extended to every part of the earth, whither their universal vocation to convert the nations, and to found Churches, conducted them. But in essence, the apostleship and the episcopacy are one and the same, accommodated to the various circumstances and expansion of the Church. The apostles and other holy men, as Barnabas and Silas, to whom they imparted apostolical powers, went from Jerusalem, bearing the faith to the world : they remained for a time in the cities, where the Churches began to form ; and as soon as the faithful could dispense with their immediate care, and after they had appointed persons to succeed them, as bishops, they proceeded to visit and to convert other cities and countries. These new bishops were bound to the Churches, which were thus confided to their direction, with the power of preaching in the adjacent country, and of ordaining other bishops wherever new Churches should be established. The apostles themselves, in this manner, confined the episcopal powers, which they entrusted to others, within boundaries, at first, more or less determined, and which generally comprised the city in which the parent Church existed, and the district for a distance around it. Thus, St. Paul left his disciple Titus in Crete, that he might place bishops in those cities of the island in which Christians might be found. As the churches and the bishops were multiplied, the limits of every diocese were more precisely defined ; and in the second or third generation, the territories in which each bishop might exercise his episcopal jurisdiction were so well known, that one bishop could not pass from his own district, without invading the rights of another. The episcopacy is therefore a continuation of the apostolical powers restricted to place.

This connexion of the episcopacy with the apostleship, has, in modern times, been often denied: it has been asserted, that in the primitive ages of the Church, the superiors of every Christian community, who were sometimes called elders, (πρεσβυτεροι), and at others, were named bishops, (ἐπισκοποι), were in rank and in power perfectly equal, and that it was only in some places that individuals acquired a *personal* pre-eminence over their compeers. But it can be proved from the sacred Scriptures, as well as from the historical data and records of the most ancient Churches, that from the beginning, in all communities in which there were several priests, there was always one, who, as bishop, endowed with higher powers, formed the centre of unity, and to whom the other members of the clergy were subjected. Timothy, whom St. Paul left as bishop in Asia, exercised jurisdiction over the priests: for St. Paul admonishes him not to receive a complaint against a priest, except upon the evidence of two or three witnesses.\* Titus possessed the same superiority in Crete.† The apocalypse shows to us, the seven rulers (the angels) of the seven Churches — of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Loadicea. That the apostles themselves placed bishops over the Churches which they founded, we are informed by the most ancient fathers, by the Roman and Alexandrian Clements, Irenæus and Tertullian. The blessed Ignatius defends with great force of expression the power and Divine institution of bishops. He exhorts the Magnesians‡ to submission to their bishop, who presides over them in the place of God, whilst the priests form the apostolic senate, and the deacons perform the ministry of Jesus Christ. He says, to the faithful of Smyrna,§ “Obey your bishop, as Jesus Christ obeys his Father, and the priests as the apostles: honour the deacons as the command of God.” He commands the Ephesians,|| to receive the bishop whom the Lord has placed over

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\* Timothy, v. 17.

† Tit. i. 5.

‡ Ignat. ep. ad Magnesios, vi

§ Epist. ad Smyrna. viii.

|| Epist. ad Ephes. vi.



his family, as they would Him who sent him. Lastly, he declares, that without the bishop, nothing can be done in the Church ; that unless empowered by him, no one can baptize, or celebrate the sacred Agape.\*

St. Irenæus, Tertullian and Eusebius, have given the order of succession of the bishops, in the apostolic and other principal Churches : the first and second to prove against heretics the unbroken and uniform tradition of the Church, which had been preserved and verified by this uninterrupted series of pastors. We are expressly informed by St. Irenæus, that Polycarp was appointed bishop of Smyrna by the apostles, and in this, he, a disciple of this holy martyr, could not have been deceived. To compel these heretics to acknowledge the authority of the Church, Tertullian challenged them to do that which it was the practice of the Catholics to do—to trace the origin of their Churches, and the order of their bishops descending from the apostles. In his time, therefore, there was no knowledge of any change introduced into the ecclesiastical constitution ; but it was universally and firmly believed, that, from the beginning, bishops had been placed by the apostles in all the newly-formed Churches.† And in fact, we observe this, in the first-born of the Christian Churches, the Church of Jerusalem, in which St. James, the brother of our Lord, was placed as bishop, by the election of the other apostles.

In the first age, succeeding the times of the apostles, the episcopal rank awakened the ambition of Thebuthis, who, according to the account of Hegesippus, enraged that he had not been chosen bishop, was the author of the first schism.

In the sacred Scriptures, and in the writings of the more ancient fathers, as in the writings of St. Irenæus,

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\* Epist. ad Smyrn. vii.

† Although a Montanist, Tertullian suffers no intimation, that he considered that any change of this nature had been introduced, to escape from him ; such a fact would have been welcome to him, as a weapon against the episcopacy from which he was then separated, and of which he spoke contemptuously as the “*ecclesia, numerus episcoporum.*”

the bishops are often designated by the title also of priests (*πρεσβυτεροι*),\* for they were indeed priests, possessing the fulness of the sacerdotal power; and even the apostles Peter and John give themselves this name. Those elders, or priests, whom St. Paul convened at Ephesus, and who, as he testified, had been chosen by the Holy Ghost, bishops to rule the Church of God, were in fact the bishops of the Churches of Asia, whom he had met to bid them farewell:† and the presbytery who imposed hands on Timothy, consisted, it is most probable, of bishops. On the contrary, it cannot be shown that the name of *bishop* is ever applied to those who were only priests. When St. Paul, in the beginning of his epistle to the Philippians, salutes “the saints in Christ Jesus, who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons,” he includes all the bishops of the different Churches of Macedonia, for he intended his epistle for all the Churches of that province.‡ It is also certain, that the apostles placed in many of the Churches, which they founded, only a bishop and deacons, as a bishop was necessary and sufficient for the wants of the few Christians, and because it was not possible in the beginning always to find men who were capable of receiving the priesthood. In some small cities and in villages, sometimes only a priest, subject to

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\* This appellation also passed from the Jewish to the Christian hierarchy. Amongst the Jews, those who were entitled to sit in the high Sanhedrim of Jerusalem, were called *πρεσβυτεροι*, as were those also (named likewise *ἀρχισυναγωγοι* in the New Testament,) who directed the assemblies in other cities, and who were subjected to the prince or chief of the synagogue.

† That they had come together from different Churches, is evident from the words, “I know that all you, among whom I have gone, preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.”—Acts, xx. 25.

‡ The Epistle to the Philippians was directed also to the other Churches of Macedonia.—Compare Phil. iv. 15, with 2 Cor. xi. 8, 9. In the first place (Phil. iv. 15) he says, that they were the only Church who ministered to his wants, in his departure from Macedonia, whilst in his epistle to the Corinthians, he gives this praise to different Churches of Macedonia: the epistles to the Philippians must therefore have been addressed to these different Churches. Epaphroditus, who was bishop of Philippi, had not, it would seem, yet returned to his flock.

the nearest bishop, was placed, until the increasing number of his flock required the appointment of a bishop.

If the episcopal order had not been originally distinct from the priesthood, an uniform change of Church government must in a short time have arisen in the east and in the west, in Persia and in Spain, in Africa and in Asia Minor : we must suppose that in all the Churches of the world, a few proud and ambitious men were able at once to raise themselves above their fellow-priests, and to deprive them of their rights : that also a contest, (for certainly the priests would not willingly have submitted to their new rulers), should have arisen between the ancient presbyterial constitution and the modern episcopal domination, and should everywhere have met with the same success, ending in the victory of the bishops, and in the confirmation of their usurped power—a contest, moreover, of which history presents not a single record.\*

In each Church or diocese, there was only one bishop,

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\* St. Jerome seems to have imagined a contest of this nature, and his words have been made of great authority by the adversaries of episcopal government. In his Commentary on the Epistle to Titus, chap. i., he says, “*Idem est presbyter qui et episcopus, et antequam diaboli instinctu studia in religione fierent et diceretur in populis, ego sum Pauli, ego Apollo, ego vero Cephæ, communi Presbyterorum consilio ecclesiæ gubernabantur. Postquam vero unusquisque eos, quos baptizaverat, suos esse putabat non Christi, in toto orbe decretum est, ut unus de presbyteris electus supponeretur cæteris, ad quem omnis ecclesiæ cura pertineret ut schismatis semina tollerentur.*”—He then appeals to Phil. i. 1 : Heb. xiii. 7 : 1 Pet. v. 1,—and continues “*Hæc propterea ut ostenderemus, apud veteres eosdem fuisse presbyteros quos et episcopos, paulatim vero (ut dissensionum plantaria evellerentur) ad unum omnem sollicitudinem esse delatam. Sicut ergo presbyteri sciunt se ex ecclesiæ consuetudine, ei qui sibi præpositus fuerit esse subjectos : ita episcopi noverint se magis consuetudine quam dispositionis Dominicæ veritate presbyteris esse majores, et in commune debere ecclesiam regere, imitantes Moysen, qui cum haberet solus præesse populo Israel, septuaginta elegit, cum quibus populum judicaret.*” See also Epistol. 82, ad Oceanum, and Epist. 101, ad Evangelum. He there mentions that it had been customary at Alexandria, for the priests to elect one of their own body, and to appoint him as their bishop. The object of St. Jerome, in this place, as he himself confesses, was to show, that originally the names of bishop and priest did not denote two distinct orders in the



or we may say that the different communities of each diocese formed together one entire whole, the pastor and

hierarchy, but only one and the same: that the rulers of the Church were called priests, (*presbyteri*, elders) on account of their age, and bishops (*episcopi*, overseers) on account of their office: that each community was in the beginning governed by a college of priests; that the inconvenience of this system was soon discovered, as divisions sprung from it, the faithful attaching themselves to the priests by whom they had been baptized; and that consequently a decree emanated from the whole Church, ordaining that in each community one priest should be placed over the others to rule and govern—hence arose the distinction between the episcopacy and the priesthood. This is evidently no more than an hypothesis; an hypothesis moreover ill devised and ill connected, which St. Jerome himself would upon more mature consideration have rejected as untenable. But it frequently happens, that in refuting an opinion, or in condemning an abuse, this father is hurried to the opposite extreme, and utters sentiments which cannot be defended. As when he is defending the excellence of virginity, against Jovinian, he speaks in most depreciating terms of matrimony, so here, to repress the haughtiness of some deacons, who, as guardians of the treasures of the Church, in several places, and particularly at Rome, considered themselves superior to the priests, he places priests on an equality with bishops. But that he was convinced of the higher dignity of the episcopacy, and that he confessed it to be essentially necessary in the organization of the Church, passages such as the following clearly demonstrate:—"Ut sciamus traditiones apostolicas sumptas de Veteri Testamento, quod Aaron et filii ejus et Levitæ in templo fuerunt, hoc sibi episcopi et presbyteri et diaconi vindicent in ecclesia."—Ep. ad Evangelum, 101. So that the bishops, by Divine institution, possess the same superiority over priests, that Aaron possessed over the priests in the old law. He asserts the same in his 34th epistle to Nepotian, whom he exhorts to subject himself to his bishop, and to honour him as the father of his soul. In his book against the Luciferians, he says, "Ecclesiæ salus in summi sacerdotis dignitate pendet: cui si non exors quædam et ab omnibus eminens detur potestas, tot in ecclesiis efficiuntur schismata quot sacerdotes." In the same work he declares that a Church without a bishop is no Church. And he in fact confesses that the opinion expressed by him in the passage at the head of this note, is new—"Putat aliquis non Scripturarum sed nostram esse sententiam." His opinion was therefore evidently derived from his private interpretation of parts of the Scripture, not from history or tradition. He places this imaginary change of Church government in the times of the apostles, at the period of the first establishment of the different Churches; as appears from his example of the contentions which arose at Corinth, where the newly-converted Christians formed parties around those who had baptized them. He concludes, that as the apostles extended their vigilance to all the Churches, there was no need of bishops, but only of priests, all possessing an equal power; until, compelled by the danger of schism, an universal decree, of which St. Jerome is as ignorant as

head of which was the bishop. In the days of the mutual and lively charity of the first Christians, the relation of the bishop with his flock was an authority founded on love, and by love strongly cemented: he was the centre of unity formed by love, and a Church without a bishop would have been considered an impossibility. "This is essential to a Church," writes St. Cyprian, "that it be a community united in its bishop, that it be a flock following its shepherd." It was therefore considered also a thing impossible, that there should be two bishops in one Church: there could, and ought to be only one centre of unity of the different communities of one Church, as there is and can be only one centre of the universal Church: there could be only one head of the ecclesiastical body, only one shepherd of the flock, only one representative of Christ, and he who would presume to disturb this union, by assuming episcopal rank or power in opposition to the lawful bishop, was esteemed a schismatic, a disturber of the order instituted

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other writers, passed through the Church, appointing a bishop to each Christian community. It is evident that this is only an unhappy interpretation of the well-known passage of the Scripture. St. Jerome appeals to no other fact of history, than the pretended practice of the Alexandrian Church, where it is said, that until the middle of the third century, the priests were accustomed to choose one of their own body, whom they placed on a seat<sup>a</sup> higher than others, and named him their bishop. This fact, as far as it is true, appears to be connected with that of Eutychius;—before whose time there was in Egypt, that is Lower Egypt or the Delta, no diocesan bishop, except the bishop of Alexandria: hence it might have occurred that the bishop of Alexandria was chosen by the college of the priests without the intervention of any provincial bishops, as none existed. The ordination was then performed either by these priests,—who, probably, as chorepiscopi, had received episcopal consecration, or if not, by some other bishops. Of an ordination by simple priests, no one ever had an idea. St. Jerome, even in the place in which he would seem to lower the authority of bishops, says, "*Quid facit episcopus, excepta ordinatione, quod presbyter non facit?*" According to the apostolical constitutions, (vii. 45), Anianus and his successor Abylas were consecrated bishops by St. Mark, at Alexandria; and at the time of St. Athanasius, the consecration of Ischyra, who had been consecrated by a priest named Colythus, was on that account declared invalid, in a synod held at Alexandria. See Le Quien, *Oriens Chris.* ii. 343; Renaudot, *Liturg. Orient. coll.* ii. 373; Abrahams Echellensis, *Eutychius Vindicatus*, Romæ, 1661, p. 50, seqq.

by Christ in his universal Church. He, therefore, who wished to belong to a Church, was required to acknowledge its bishop, and to enter into communion with him ; and as the community was contained in the bishop and represented by him, he found himself in communion with the Church.\*

As the apostles viewed the preaching of the word of God as their especial calling, which was to be preferred to all other duties, so the bishops, their successors, deemed the instruction of the faithful by preaching to form the principal occupation of their ministry. It was the bishop who announced the word of God to his assembled people, and if in the eastern Churches priests sometimes performed this duty, they did so only with the consent of the bishop : in the west, we cannot, for ages, find an example of this practice, and in the African church St. Augustine was the first priest who was empowered by a bishop to preach. The administration of the sacraments was the next duty attached to the episcopal dignity,† for it was only by a commission from the bishop, that priests could take part therein. The bishop in particular ordinarily offered the holy sacrifice of the Eucharist in the presence of his flock, and thence received the name, by preeminence, of priest and high-priest, (*sacerdos, summus sacerdos*). Priests received indeed the sacerdotal powers, and so far were heirs and successors of the apostles, but with this restriction, that in the exercise of these powers they should be dependant on their bishops : they could not propagate these powers by ordination, for they possessed not the character of fruitfulness which the bishops had received.

In the first ages of Christianity, when the different societies of the faithful were composed of those truly elected servants of God, whom a deeply-felt sense of

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\* “Unde scire debes episcopum in ecclesia esse, et ecclesiam in episcopo, et si qui cum episcopo non sint, in ecclesia non esse.”—Cyprian. ep. 69.

† “Οὐκ ἔξον ἔστιν χωρὶς τοῦ ἐπισκοποῦ οὔτε βαπτίζειν, οὔτε ἀγαπῆν ποιεῖν.”—Ignat. Ep. ad Smyrn. 8.—“Dandi baptismum jus quidem habet summus sacerdos, qui est episcopus ; dehinc presbyteri et diaconi, non tamen sine episcopi auctoritate.”—Tertull. de Bapt. c. xvii.



the necessity of faith and of charity had conducted into the bosom of the Church, these holy men were bound in intimate union with their bishop, who in his more important transactions consulted his people, as well laics as clergy. Thus he determined, with their counsel, who were worthy to be admitted as members of the Church, and who had merited expulsion from it. The unanimity of spirits in all was the foundation of their cooperation : but the authority of the bishop was not at all dependant on the community, not granted by it, not to be restrained, enlarged, or resumed by it at will. The community could no more deprive the bishop of his sacred character than it could invest him with it ; for, although he might have been elected by the community, yet he received his authority and his mission by consecration. He was placed by the Holy Ghost to rule the Church of God. Those high powers which Christ gave his apostles, passed to him ; and whenever, in a question of doctrine or ecclesiastical discipline, the opinion of the community differed from his, they were bound to yield to him, not he to them. But when the Churches, by the increase of the number of their members, lost a part of their primitive purity of thought and of action ; when many were allured to Christianity perhaps more by the hope of advantage than by the zeal of their faith and love ; when others arose who had not themselves embraced the Christian religion, but had inherited it from their fathers, and were on that account more indifferent and cool—their ancient practices fell away ; the bishop could no longer confide that the majority of his flock would be actuated by a love of truth and of justice ; he was compelled to decree and to decide many things without their counsel, often against their will.

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## SECTION II.

DIVISION OF THE CLERGY: PRIESTS, DEACONS: THE  
 INFERIOR DEGREES OF THE CHURCH-MINISTRY:  
 DEACONESSES: THE FORMATION OF RURAL COMMU-  
 NITIES: CHOREPISCOPI: ELECTION OF THE CLERGY.\*

It was a care of the apostles to place, in the greater cities, either at the first establishment of the Church, or when the number of the faithful had increased, together with the bishop, several priests,† to stand around him as his advisers, and to assist him, but who were always in perfect dependance on him, in the administration of the sacraments. As they participated with him in the sublime power of offering the eucharistic sacrifice, so, like him, they were named priests (*sacerdotes*, ἱερείς); although this appellation was applied, by excellence, to the bishop, who was distinguished also from the priests of the second order by the title of high-priest or priest of the first order. As individuals, the priests possessed no authority in the government of the Church, but as a college, to which the bishop belonged as head or president, they joined in the administration: they formed the presbytery or senate with which the bishop consulted in his most momentous affairs, in the choice of his clergy, in the direction of ecclesiastical discipline, and in the regulation of the canonical penance. Hence it is that

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\* J. Morini, *Commentarius de SS. Ecclesiæ Ordinationibus*, Amstelod. 1695, fol.; Marii Lupi, *de Parochis ante annum Christi Millessimum*, Bergom. 1788; F. Hallier, *de Sacris Electionibus et Ordinationibus ex antiquo et novo Ecclesiæ Usu*, Romæ, 1749; 3 vols. fol.

† Different from the priests were the *elders of the Church* (*seniores ecclesiæ*), of whom mention is sometimes made by the fathers, as by St. Optatus; who relates that Mensurius, bishop of Carthage, when he was compelled to retire from the city during the persecution of Diocletian, confided the treasures of his Church to the faithful elders, (*fidelibus senioribus*). And in the *Gestis Purgat. Cœcil. et Felicis*, p. 268, we read: "Omnes vos episcopi, presbyteri, diaconi et seniores scitis." The elders were virtuous and respectable laics, who assisted the clergy in the administration of the ecclesiastical revenues.

St. Ignatius, in exhorting the faithful to obey their bishops, requires of them also that they should honour the priests, and follow the decrees of the presbytery; and hence St. Cornelius would not determine upon admitting to communion the confessors who had favoured the party of Novatian, until he had consulted with his priests; a practice observed also by St. Cyprian at Carthage.

The deacons occupied the third rank in the sacred ministry: these were the successors of those seven almoners whom the apostles placed in the Church of Jerusalem. But that these seven were called to higher and more holy duties than the distribution of alms and the care of widows, is evident from the qualities which the apostles required in them,—that they should be men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. It is evident also from their ordination, which was by the imposition of hands, and from the apostolical functions exercised by Stephen and Philip. They were in the beginning the coadjutors of the apostles, and were afterwards the official assistants of the bishops. According to the expression of the apostolic constitutions, the deacon should be the eye and ear, the mouth and hand, the heart and soul of the bishop, the mediator between him and the people, the executor of his will, as the priests were the members of his council. Smaller communities were without deacons as they were without priests, whose duties could be performed by the bishop. Their vocation was, therefore, to a sacred ministry, not to merely economical employments; they were, as the holy Ignatius says, not ministers of meat and of drink, but of the Church of God, and of the mysteries of Jesus Christ. Tertullian enumerates them among the guides and pastors of the faithful.

The office of the deacons was in part liturgical, and in part was connected with the discipline of the Church. They were the immediate assistants of the bishop or priest in the oblation of the holy sacrifice: it was their especial duty to collect the offerings of the faithful, and to present them on the altar to the priest, to accompany



him in the administration of the eucharist, ordinarily by giving the chalice to the communicant, and to convey the sacrament to the absent. By a commission from the bishop, they could baptize equally with the priest. In the celebration of the liturgy, they were also the heralds of the bishop: by pronouncing a known form of words, they proclaimed to the different classes the time of admission into the church, and of departure from the sacred mysteries; they made known the commencement of the prayers, and the more solemn parts of the sacrifice. They read aloud those portions of the holy gospels which formed part of the liturgy; and to their custody were entrusted the sacred vessels belonging to the church. Finally, in the assemblies of the faithful, it was their duty to preserve order and propriety, and they continued also to be, what they had been from their first ordination, the almoners of the bishop.

Many Churches, and among them the Church of Rome, for a long time confined the number of their deacons to seven, in imitation of the original model at Jerusalem: the synod of Neocæsarea, in 315, made this number obligatory in that province: but other Churches, such as the Alexandrian, exceeded this number. As a mark of their inferiority to bishops and priests, they stood in the church while the latter sat: the performance of any sacred rite, as the administration of a sacrament, was generally committed to them only when no priest was present. From their constant intercourse with the bishop, it happened in an early age, that one of the number was selected by the bishop, who favoured him with his particular confidence, and committed to him the execution of the most important affairs. To denote his higher office, he was in later times named the archdeacon.

As in the first years of the Church, deacons were sometimes placed over entire communities; and as they co-operated with the bishop in the offering of the sacrifice; as, like the priests, they received the eucharist immediately from the hands of the bishop; and, like them, dispensed it to the faithful, some of them formed

to themselves the idea that with regard to the sacrifice of the mass, they were equal to the priests, and could, therefore, offer it. The synod of Arles, in 314, repressed this presumption of the deacons in its 15th canon: the synod of Nice a few years after forbade them to administer the eucharist to priests, as it did not become those, who had not power to sacrifice, to present the body of the Lord to those who possessed this power. In these first ages, and later, in less numerous communities, the deacons performed all the inferior duties of the ministry; but, as in the beginning, the apostleship, or the episcopacy, contained within itself the priesthood, which appeared only as a distinct order, when the numbers of the faithful required its services, so the lower orders of the clergy were developed from the deaconship, when, in extensive Churches, the deacons no longer sufficed for the increasing weight of their occupations. Subdeacons (*subdiaconi* or *hypodiaconi*), were first known in the western Church about the middle of the third century. St. Cyprian employed them, when he was removed from his flock, to convey and to receive his letters, and sent them as messengers to other Churches. St. Cornelius mentions, in his epistle to Fabian, the seven subdeacons of the Roman Church; but we do not find them in the east before the first half of the fourth century. At first they had no particular liturgical duty; they were not ordained by the imposition of hands nor within the presbytery,\* and were chiefly employed in such functions as the guarding of the entrance of the church during the sacred mysteries.†

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\* We find, however, in the Apostolical Constitutions, (viii. 12), directions to the bishop, enjoining him to impose hands on the subdeacon in ordination (ἐπιθησεις ἐπ' αὐτῷ τὰς χεῖρας). To this is opposed the 51st canon of St. Basil, as are also the decrees of the western Church, as, for example, the fifth canon of the fourth synod of Carthage. We must, therefore, suppose with Von Drey (Essays on the Canons and Constitutions of the Apostles, p. 141), that the above expression denotes only *ordination in general*, without any particular imposition of hands; we must distinguish χειροθεσία from χειροτονία. This is the more probable, as the ordination even of Lectors is sometimes expressed by the imposition of hands.

† Von Drey, (Essays, &c., 140), argues from the 33d canon of the

The *Acolythes* (ἀκολουθοί) were known as a distinct class of ecclesiastical ministers only in the Latin Church; and were, probably, introduced in the earlier part of the third century, as SS. Cyprian and Cornelius speak of them in their writings. About the same time *Exorcists* were instituted. It was their duty to lay their hands on the energumeni, or those possessed by evil spirits, to pray over them, and to provide for all the spiritual and corporal wants of these afflicted persons. This class of the clergy was known only in the greater Churches: in smaller communities the bishop or the priests performed all the functions of their office. More ancient was the order of *Lectors*, who were enumerated amongst the clergy certainly in the time of Tertullian. In the assemblies of the faithful, they read portions of the sacred Scriptures, and attended particularly to the instruction of the catechumens. Finally, in some Churches there were ecclesiastics named *Ostiarrii* or *Porters*; to them the care of the churches was committed: it was their duty to exclude those who were not permitted to enter;—a duty of importance in the more numerous communities, and in times when the faithful were carefully separated from those who were forbidden to be present at the holy sacrifice. These orders, and especially that of the *Lectors*, were considered as steps preparatory to ascending to the higher degree of the priesthood.

Females also, namely deaconesses, were employed in the service of the Church, and were solemnly instituted in their office by the imposition of the hands of the bishop. The apostles appointed the first deaconesses:

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synod of Elvira, that subdeacons possessed, as early as the commencement of the fourth century, the privilege of assisting at the sacrifice of the altar. But evidently he must have read this canon as it is printed in the Tübingen Quartalschr. for 1821, p. 16, and in some other older works, thus: “Placuit in totum prohiberi episcopis, presbyteris, diaconibus et subdiaconibus positis in ministerio, &c. &c.” The original reading is undoubtedly that which is given by Alba Spinæus, Aguirre, Routh, iv. 51, Harduin, i. 254. “Placuit in totum prohiberi episcopis, presbyteris, diaconis vel omnibus clericis positis in ministerio, &c.” The word *subdiaconibus*, was, as it appears to me, first introduced into this canon by the synod of Worms, in 868, which adopted this canon.



St. Paul mentions one, named Phœbe, at Chenchrea, and describes (1 Tim. v. 9) the qualifications requisite in those who should be admitted to their office. Widows were generally chosen; and, according to the prescription of the apostle, such as had passed their sixtieth year, who had been only once married, and who had educated children. In the language of the Church, deaconesses are, therefore, called widows (*χρηραι*), and their state is named a widowhood. Virgins were, however, sometimes, even in an early period, appointed to this ministry; but in the African Church this was so extraordinary, that Tertullian, reprobating the election of a person scarcely twenty years of age, declares it to be a thing before unheard of. Their services were in those times indispensable and benevolent. The baptism of female catechumens, when administered by immersion, required their assistance, as did also the instructions which preceded the baptism. They undertook the care of the sick, more particularly of females; and as the deacons were employed in the affairs of the bishop, which regarded the men, so were the deaconesses engaged in the same manner with the women, of each community. In churches in which there was a distinct entrance for women, the deaconesses were appointed to guard it, and to see that order was observed in the church by those of their own sex.

In the country, at a distance from cities, there were, in the remotest times, communities with their hierarchies; but we do not possess certain records of them. In the age of St. Justin, it appears to have been customary for the Christians who resided in the country, and not too far distant, to visit the city on Sunday, and to receive the holy Eucharist with their brethren.\* But those Christians who dwelt at a greater distance from cities, must, as soon as their number re-

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\* Justini Apolog. I.: “Τῇ τοῦ ἡλίου λεγομένη ἡμέρᾳ πάντων κατὰ πόλεις ἢ ἀγροὺς μενοντων ἐπὶ το αὐτο συνέλευσις γίνεται.” These words may, however, be made to signify that the rural, as well as the urban, communities had their own assemblies. See Knittel, *Prisca Ruris Ecclesia*, Brunsvici, 1767, p. 22.

quired it, have had their own pastor, whom the bishop of the city, from which they had received their faith, sent to them. This pastor did not always reside continually with his flock, but when called, returned to his bishop, and this was especially the case when the community was too poor to maintain him. There were, however, in the earliest ages, rural Churches, to which the pastors were perpetually attached, and these pastors may be considered as the first country parish priests. It is probable that those Millenarian priests in Egypt, of whom Dionysius of Alexandria speaks, were of this class. These pastors were ordinarily priests, but sometimes deacons were appointed.\* It was not customary to place bishops in the country; but, about the end of this First Period, we find in the east bishops with the title of rural bishops.† They are first mentioned in the canon of the synod of Ancyra, in 314, and must have been introduced as early as the preceding century: in the west they continued for a long time unknown after they had been instituted in the east. They governed several rural Churches, or a district which comprised many communities and their pastors; they were not independant, but subject to the bishop in whose diocese their district lay, and by whom they had been appointed. For the most part they were not bishops, but priests, with the power of ordaining clerics only of the inferior orders,—subdeacons, lectors, and exorcists. The council of Neocæsarea likens them to the seventy assistants of Moses, but distinguishes them from the ordinary clergy of the country, by empowering them to offer the holy sacrifice in presence of the bishop and priests of the city, a privilege which was not granted to the others. But there were some amongst them who were bishops by consecration: for it sometimes happened that in small towns

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\* See canon 77 of the synod of Elvira: "*Si quis Diaconus regens plebem sine episcopo vel presbytero aliquos baptizaverit, episcopus eos per benedictionem perficere debet.*" St. Cyprian, Ep. 11, speaks of the duties of priests and *deacons* towards the flocks committed to their care.

\* Chorepiscopi, ἐπισκοποι της χωρης.

or villages, bishops were ordained; contrary, indeed, to the prevailing practice, and were dependant in some degree on the bishops of the city from whom they received protection. It not unfrequently occurred, also, that a bishop was not able to remain in the Church for which he had been ordained, or was, perhaps, driven from it: he would then pass into another diocese, where a rural district was assigned to him; and it was decreed by the council of Nice, that all Novatian bishops who should return to the Catholic faith, should be placed in the station of priests or chorepiscopi. They possessed, indeed, episcopal powers, but they could exercise them only in subjection to the diocesan bishop, whence it was in a later age declared, by the council of Antioch, that the chorepiscopi should not ordain a priest or a deacon, without the permission of the urban bishop. It is, therefore, more than probable that the fifteen chorepiscopi, who subscribed their names to the decrees of the council of Nice, were bishops by ordination.

The election of the clergy could not canonically take place without the participation of the assembled community. In the very beginning of the Church, the faithful elected Joseph and Matthias, one of whom was to enter into the place of Judas, the fallen apostle: they chose also the seven whom the apostles ordained deacons. In succeeding times, the bishop, in particular, (who, to enjoy the confidence of all, required the testimony of all that he was the most worthy) was chosen by the voices of his brethren. In ages, when the not yet very numerous communities were formed entirely or almost entirely of holy men, when all were filled with one spirit, and when ambitious and other impure motives influenced none,—this was certainly the most desirable method of instituting the ministers of the Church. For thus, the pastor knew his sheep, and his sheep knew him: the people, or at least, the majority of the people, who had elected the bishop, would the more willingly obey the commands of him whom their own choice had placed over them. But in later years, when persons of all characters had entered the Church,



when the spirit of party had expelled the ancient unity and love, when the communities were open to the influence of passion and demagogical arts, it became necessary that the Church should confine as narrowly as possible the power of the people in the election of the clergy.

But to fill the vacant see of a bishop, the voice of the people was by no means sufficient: he upon whom their choice had fallen, must gain also the vote of the clergy, and receive ordination from the bishops of the neighbouring Churches, before he could be considered a member of the episcopal body of the Catholic Church. St. Clement of Rome,\* says on this subject, that the apostles not only appointed bishops themselves, but ordained that after the death of these bishops, other approved men, chosen by authorized persons (the neighbouring bishops), with the consent of the community, should be taken to succeed them; and St. Cyprian† declares, that this concurrence of the bishops of the province, in the election of one of their body, is a practice founded on universal and apostolical tradition.‡ Ordinarily, the election was conducted under the superintendence of these bishops of the province; and not unfrequently the bishops alone elected, their choice being afterwards approved by the people. Thus, when Narcissus was driven from Jerusalem, the bishops of the circumjacent Churches proceeded to the election of his successor, Dios. § According to ancient tradi-

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\* Ep. ad Corinth. c. xlv.

† Ep. lxviii.

‡ When St. Cyprian wished to show, that the election of St. Cornelius, which was contested by the Novatians, was valid, he says, (Ep. ad Antonian), "Factus est Cornelius Episcopus de Dei et de Christi ejus judicio, de clericorum pene omnium testimonio, de plebis, quæ tunc affuit suffragio et de sacerdotum antiquorum et bonorum virorum (the ἑλλογισμοὶ ἄνδρες of St. Clement) collegio." Ep. lxviii. He expresses the parts taken by the people and the bishops in the election: "Ut de universæ fraternitatis suffragio, et de episcoporum, qui in præsentia convenerant, judicio, episcopatus ei deferretur." The people, therefore, had the *right of suffrage*; the bishops examined and confirmed their choice.

§ Euseb. vi. 10: "Δοξαν τοις των ὁμορων ἐκκλησιων προεστωσιν, ἐφ' ἑτέρου μετῴσιν ἐπισκοπον χειροτονίαν."

tion, three bishops at least were required to concur in the election and ordination of a new bishop;\* and it was on this account, that Novation so anxiously laboured to bring together in Rome, three Italian bishops, to elect and ordain him.

The election of the other ecclesiastics was reserved almost entirely to the bishop, although either the express approbation of the community, or the testimony of the clergy, was received.† The installation took place in the presbyterium often after the approbation of the assembled clergy had been given,‡ and always with the consent of the college of priests. In the choice of the deacons and inferior ministers, the bishop acted according to his own discretion.

\* The first synod of Arles, (can. xx.) decreed, that the bishop to be ordained, should be assisted by seven, or at least three, bishops. The first apostolical canon says only, "episcopus a duobus aut tribus episcopis ordinetur."

† Cyprian, ep. xxxiii. "In ordinationibus clericis, fratres carissimi, solemus vos ante consulere, et mores et merita singulorum communi concilio ponderare." This epistle is addressed to the priests, deacons, and people of the Church of Carthage.

‡ Constit. Apost. viii. 16. It is said in the prayer for the ordination of a priest, "Ἐπειδε ἐπὶ τον δουλον σου τουτον, τον ψαφω και κρισει τον κληρον παντος πρεσβυτεριον επιδοθεντα."—The clearest and most distinct account of the proceedings at the election of the clergy, is contained in the sixth canon of Theophilus of Alexandria. (Harduin, Concil. i. 1198) of which, although posterior to the times of which we are now treating, as it makes known to us the most ancient discipline, we may here insert the substance. "When it is proposed to receive a man amongst the clergy, the whole presbytery (*ἐκκλησιον*) should elect him, and the bishop confirm the election: or the bishop shall ordain him with the consent of the clergy, in the church, and in the presence of the people, of whom the bishop shall inquire if they can give a good testimony to him whom he has elected. The ordination shall not be performed in secret." The election may therefore originate either with the bishop or the presbytery; but with this difference—when the presbytery elects, the bishop approves or confirms the choice, but when the bishop elects, the presbytery only gives its consent. See, also, the beautiful address of the bishop to the people, at the ordination of a priest, contained in the present Roman pontifical. "Quoniam, Fratres Charissimi, rectori navis et navigio deferendis eadem est vel securitatis ratio vel communis timoris," &c.

## SECTION III.

## METROPOLITANS—SYNODS—THE UNITY AND INTEGRITY OF THE WHOLE CHURCH.\*

As the communities of cities and the surrounding rural districts, formed together one entire whole, subjected to one head—a diocese subjected to its bishop,—so many dioceses were united in unity, and in subjection to one chief, the bishop of the mother-Church. This union was the foundation, laid by the apostles, of the metropolitical authority. The first ambassadors of the Lord, even St. Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, addressed themselves first to the Jews, and visited first those cities in which the Jews in greater number resided. In these cities, the Jewish sanhedrim, which exercised a judicial authority over the Jews of the province, held their seat. But when Christian communities had formed themselves in these cities, they entered into the place of the sanhedrim ; presbyteries, with their bishops, arose according to the model of the sanhedrim ; and when Christianity had reached to the surrounding cities, these daughter Churches and their bishops were in a natural relation of dependance and subordination to the chief or mother Church and its bishop, as the Jewish communities of the province had been dependant on the chief synedrium.

Even in the first years of the apostolic mission, the metropolitan union between Jerusalem and the communities composed of Jewish converts, in Galilee, Judea, and Samaria, existed in the same manner, as the Jewish sanhedrim, in the cities of these provinces, had received their jurisdiction from the principal synedrium at Jerusalem. The Church of this city retained its metropo-

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\* F. B. Ferrarius, *de antiquo Epistolarum Eccle. Genere* : Mediol. 1613, 4to. ; Jo. Rud. Kiesling, *De stabili primitive Ecclesiæ ope litterarum Communicatoriarum Connubio* ; Lips. 1745, 4to. ; J. A. Möhler, *Die Einheit in der Kirche*, (Unity in the Church) Tubing. 1825.



litical dignity,\* as long as it and the other Churches of Palestine consisted chiefly of converts from Judaism; but when, in the war under Adrian, these Churches were destroyed, and a new Church, formed principally of pagan converts, was established at Ælia, this dignity was transferred to Cæsarea, the Church of which had precedence before that of Ælia, on account of its apostolical antiquity. It had been founded by St. Peter, in the conversion of Cornelius, the first pagan that embraced Christianity. The Church next in rank to the Church of Jerusalem, was that of Antioch, the metropolis of all the communities in Syria and the surrounding states. Some years later, the Church of Alexandria was established by St. Mark. There the Jews resided in greater numbers than in any other city out of Judea: their ethnarch held rank before all the other chiefs of the people in the dispersion, and on this account, the bishop of Alexandria, although this Church was founded later than the Church of Antioch, and by one not an apostle, was the first amongst the bishops of the east; and as the Jews of Cyrene and Lybia were subject to the ethnarch of Alexandria, so the authority of the Christian bishops extended over the Churches of those provinces, the bishops of which it was his duty to ordain.† In the west, Rome was the only city in which the Jews had congregated in great numbers, and therefore the Roman was the only metropolitan Church formed in the beginning of Christianity in that part of the world. The metropolitical powers of the bishop of Rome, embraced the ten suburbicarian provinces,—that is, the central and

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\* In the words of Hegesippus, in Euseb. iii. 32, we may recognize the metropolitical authority of the first bishops of Jerusalem: “Προηγουνται πασης εκκλησιης ως μαρτυρες και απο γενους του Κυριου.” We are hereby to understand the Churches in Judea, Galilee and Samaria. He is speaking of the relatives of our Lord.

† Here is one example of the difference between the civil and the ecclesiastical division of the Roman provinces, a proof that the apostles, in the formation of the Churches, adhered not to the civil division, but to the constitution of the Jewish communities. The Pentapolis or Cyrene, and Lybia Mareotis, belonged, politically, not to the Egyptian, but to the African province, which was subject to the senate, whilst Egypt was an imperial province.

lower Italy, and the islands of Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica, for which provinces he ordained bishops. The sixth canon of the council of Nice, appealing to the example of the bishop of Rome, confirms to the bishop of Alexandria his ancient authority over Egypt, Lybia and Pentapolis; and this is explained by Rufinus, who in his ecclesiastical history, gives, as the substance of this canon, that the bishop of Alexandria has authority over the Churches of Egypt, as the bishop of Rome has over the Churches of the suburbicarian provinces.\*

Besides the three great metropolitan Churches of Antioch, Alexandria and Rome, there were other Churches, as those of Ephesus and Carthage, which held a superior rank and exercised a superior authority. The bishops of these Churches assembled synods, and presided over them: thus, Polycrates of Ephesus held a council of the bishops of his province on the subject of the paschal solemnity; and Agrippinus and Cyprian of Carthage called together the African bishops, to deliberate on the baptism of heretics. But we cannot expect to find, in these early ages, the metropolitan authority in its full formation.† The parent apostolical Churches generally assumed this character, and were considered as the authorized guardians of the traditions of the apostles who had founded them. In the fourth century, however, the metropolitan system had become so far developed and extended, that it then prevailed throughout the whole of the eastern, and over a great portion of the western Church; and when Constantine gave a new division to the Roman empire, this was the more easily adopted in the constitution of the Church,

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\* "Ut apud Alexandriam, et in urbe Roma vetusta consuetudo servetur, ut vel ille Ægypti, vel hic *suburbicariarum* ecclesiarum solitudinem gerat." Ten provinces of Italy were named suburbicarian, because they were governed by the *vicarius urbis Romæ*: the seven other provinces in northern Italy were governed by the *vicarius Italiæ*.

† In Spain, the synod of Elvira mentions an *episcopus cathedræ primæ*; and Basilides, whom Dionysius calls (Euseb. vii. 26) "των κατὰ πενταπολιν παροικιων επισκοπος," must have been, according to this expression, a metropolitan bishop, probably as bishop of Ptolomais, but without the right of ordaining the bishops of the province.



as the chief cities in the different provinces, were ordinarily those from which the faith had been received by the cities around them. Then also arose the distinction between the ancient, the greater, apostolical metropolitan sees, Antioch, Alexandria and Rome, and those which were afterwards formed; the superiority of the former was distinctly stated, or in other words, the rank of patriarch was established. The sixth canon of the council of Nice, confirmed first the ancient and higher rights of the bishops of Alexandria, Antioch and Rome; secondly, the authority of metropolitans (the appellation was first employed by this council) generally, and in particular their right to sanction the election of bishops in the respective provinces. That the ecclesiastical metropolitan districts should coincide with the civil division of the provinces of the empire, was first decreed by the council of Antioch in 341; in its ninth canon it declared, that the bishop of the metropolis or chief city should direct the ecclesiastical affairs of the whole province; and that, therefore, no bishop should undertake any affair of importance, without having previously obtained the consent of his metropolitan.

In the same canon, also, was confirmed the practice, which was in conformity with the spirit of the Church, and which had been observed from the beginning, that the metropolitan should determine nothing of moment until he had consulted with the bishops of his province. With the constitution of the metropolitan authority was essentially connected the institution of *synods*. What the presbytery was to the bishop, the provincial synod was to the metropolitan; it was to him an ecclesiastical senate, in which the common interests of his province were treated. The institution of synods sprung necessarily from the spirit, from the very existence of the Church. In them, the unity of the Churches and the unanimity of the bishops in faith, in love, and ecclesiastical discipline, were confirmed: schisms, which menaced this unity, were averted; abuses, which sometimes disturbed the communities, were corrected; novelties in doctrine were suppressed by the solemn



judgment of many bishops, or their baneful influence was lessened. Every bishop at the synod, was the representative of his Church, the organ of its faith and doctrine, for "his Church was in him, as he was in his Church:" no one could suppose, that the community could wish other than its bishop to speak its mind to the members of the synod, for this would have been a discord, a disunion between the pastor and the flock, to remedy which evil, and to restore mutual confidence and harmony, would be the first care of the assembled prelates. The different bishops were, as successors of the apostles, or of the apostolical men who founded their Churches, the authentic witnesses of the faith which in the beginning had been implanted in them. A synod was therefore a *representation*\* of a less or greater part of the Church—a general council representing the whole Church, was not possible in those days of persecution; its voice was the voice of that part of the Church: it was the united Church of that province, or of a more extensive district; and he who would continue in the communion of the Church, must submit to its determinations.

The first synod was held by the apostles at Jerusalem, to quell the contentions which had then arisen in the Church: of the subsequent ecclesiastical assemblies, we have no records before the middle of the second century. About the year 150, Montanism, which then began to appear, caused several synods, mentioned by Eusebius, to be held in Asia Minor. At the close of this century, the bishops of many provinces in the east

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\* This is the expression of Tertullian:—"Aguntur per Græcias illa certis in locis concilia ex universis Ecclesiis, per quæ et altiora quæque in commune tractantur et ipsa *representatio totius nominis Christiani* magna veneratione celebratur."—De Jejuniis, c. xiii. Many writers, among whom is Ceillier, Hist. des Auteurs Eccl. ii. 473, imagine that Tertullian is speaking of Montanist synods, as those who met in them prepared themselves by fasting. But what could prevent the Catholics from using the same preparation? Tertullian wishes to shame the Catholics of his country, who assembled, as he says, only at meals, by the example of the Greek Catholics. It is not credible, that so many Montanist communities could have been formed in Greece, in the time of Tertullian.

and in the west, assembled to determine the question on the celebration of Easter. The metropolitan ordinarily presided at these synods; and we read only of Palma, bishop of Amastris in Pontus, who presided as senior prelate; probably, because no metropolitan had then been acknowledged in that province. In the commencement of the third century, there followed the councils under Agrippinus at Carthage, and those at Iconium and Synnada, which met to deliberate on the baptism of heretics; and later, those which St. Cyprian called for the same purpose. After these, was celebrated at Antioch, a great council which represented nearly the whole of the eastern Church: there were assembled bishops from Cappadocia, Pontus, Phrygia, Cilicia, Palestine, Syria, Arabia, and Egypt: from the more distant parts came only the metropolitans, who in these larger councils represented their provinces, as did the bishops their dioceses in the provincial synods. In some provinces, as in that of Cappadocia, synods were held regularly every year.\*

Bishops were the ordinary and the necessary members of synods; but priests, also, sometimes took part in their deliberations. Firmilian remarks, that bishops and priests appeared at the annual synods of Cappadocia; and in the council of Antioch, there was a priest named Malchion, who convicted Paul of Samoseta of error; and in the synodal letter, the names of Malchion and of another priest, Lucius, are before the subscriptions of several bishops, who are mentioned only in general. Deacons, likewise, were sometimes present; but during the consultations they stood, while the priests were permitted to sit.†

In councils, such as that of Antioch in the east, and of Arles, at a later period, in the west, was represented *that unity of the whole Church*, which powerfully

\* Firmiliani, ep. ad Cyprian. "Necessario apud nos fit ut per singulos annos seniores et præpositi in unum conveniamus ad disponenda ea quæ curæ nostræ commissa sunt."

† At the opening of the council of Elvira, it is said, "Cum condiscent sancti et religiosi episcopi . . . residentibus etiam viginti et sex presbyteris, adstantibus diaconis et omni plebe, episcopi dixerunt."

bound and held together all the faithful of all the communities,—an unity, which was not discovered or formed in later times; but which was the original, prevailing principle, the vivifying soul that had dwelt in Christianity from its birth, and had been implanted in it by the Divine founder of the Church. As the apostles, by their epistles, by their continual travels, and by their messengers, maintained and promoted this unity, so their disciples—Ignatius and Polycarp—continued their holy labours, by letters addressed to neighbouring and to distant communities.

Bishops, whose personal character gave authority to their station, were enabled, by means of this existing and organic unity, to exercise a wide-extending influence in the Church; as when Dionysius of Corinth, in the second century, directed letters to the distant communities of Pontus. One and the same spirit of faith, and of love, of joy, of sorrow, and of mutual benevolence, bound all together. All were children of the same mother, the parent Church of Jerusalem; all were guided by the one indivisible episcopacy, the continuation of the apostleship; all were daily nourished by the same food, the body and blood of their Saviour: they were oppressed from without, by paganism, and menaced by a multitude of heresies; but they well knew—individuals and communities—that, although scattered over the greater part of the earth, they were united by bonds, which were carried beyond this life: they well knew that the many Churches of the world formed only the one great Catholic Church, the one flock under its Divine shepherd.\*

This unity of the entire Church, was seen also in the unity of the episcopacy, which was a body of members

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\* Of the many passages which might be adduced to illustrate this truth, we will give only the following: "Omne genus ad originem suam censeatur necesse est: ita tot ac tantæ ecclesiæ, una est: illa ab apostolis prima, ex qua omnes, sic omnes primæ et omnes apostolicæ, dum una: omnes probant unitatem. Communicatio pacis et appellatio fraternitatis et contesseratio hospitalitatis: quæ jura non alia ratio regit, quam ejusdem sacramenti una traditio."—Tertull. De Præscrip. c. xx.



united under one head. "There are many shepherds," says St. Cyprian, "but they feed only one flock : all are closely connected in concord and unity : all watch for the welfare of the entire Church, and although to each a part is assigned, each has a solicitude for the whole."\* An important event in any community was considered and treated as an occurrence by which the others were affected : the bishop of that community gave intelligence thereof to his colleagues ; for by means of the bishop of the principal Churches, a constant and regular epistolary intercourse was maintained with all parts of christendom. A Christian, who wished to be received into communion with a foreign Church, must first present letters of peace and of orthodox faith from his own bishop ; and he, who had been excluded from communion in one Church, could not expect to be admitted into another. Thus Marcion, who had been excommunicated by his father, the bishop of Sinope, was repulsed when he sought to enter into communion with the clergy of Rome. The fathers of the council of Antioch, who deposed Paul, bishop of Samoseta, made this proceeding known, in a synodal letter, to Dionysius of Rome, to Maximus of Alexandria, to all the bishops and Churches of the world, that they might no longer address their epistles to Paul, but to the new bishop, Domnus, and receive their letters only from the latter. It was particularly customary for the bishops of the greater Churches, to announce their elevation to their brethren in letters, named "letters of peace," in which they repeated a profession of their faith.

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\* "Omnes enim nos decet pro corpore totius ecclesiæ cujus per varias provincias membra digesta sunt excubare," say the Roman clergy to St. Cyprian, 36.—"Etsi pastores multi sumus, unum tamen gregem pascimus, et oves universas quas Christus sanguine suo et passione quæ-sivit, colligere et fovere debemus."—Cypr. Ep. xxviii. "Episcopatus unus est cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur."—Cypr. De Unitate Ecclesiæ.

## SECTION IV.

## THE PRIMACY.

As the bishop in the midst of the faithful of his diocese, and the metropolitan in the midst of many Churches and their bishops, were the depositories and the representatives of unity, so the entire Church had its centre, which, as a key-stone of the whole edifice, was destined to preserve in unity of faith and of love, all the Churches, and all the faithful throughout the world. The Jewish Church had had its chief, its point of unity : the Christian Church therefore was to correspond with its prototype also in this respect : Peter and his successors were to enter into the place of Aaron, and his successors, the high-priests of the old law. What the bishop was in his diocese, and the metropolitan in his province, the bishop of Rome was in the universal Church : as the bishop presided over his presbytery and the metropolitan over his provincial synod, so the Roman pontiff presided and presides over the assembled episcopacy, as the point which connects together all the bishops of the world, with whom, therefore, all are united by an ever-existing intercourse of letters of peace and communion.

Our Lord conferred upon his apostle, Peter, the supreme authority in the Church. After he had required and obtained from him a public profession of his faith, he declared him to be the rock, the foundation upon which he would build his Church ; and, at the same time, promised that he would give to him the keys of the kingdom of heaven. In the same manner, after our Lord had required and obtained from the same apostle an assurance of his boundless love, he invested him with the power of chief pastor of his flock, by those solemnly repeated words—"Feed my lambs, feed my sheep ;"—govern my people, govern their rulers. Faith made Peter worthy to become the rock, the foundation of the Church, and love entitled him to feed, as chief

pastor, the flock of Jesus Christ : for as the Church is built on faith, and can endure only by faith, so Peter and his successors can continue to be the foundation of the Church, only by a repeatedly renewed profession of faith : and as the Church can exist only in the spirit of its founder, the spirit of love, (for Christ has said, he that would be first in his Church, must become the servant of all, and only love can give birth to such humility), our Lord, when he bestowed the pre-eminence of head of his Church, exacted as a condition a declaration of love, fervent and unbounded.

Hence, in the enumeration of the apostles, frequently repeated by the Evangelists, we find that Peter is always the first named :—he is sometimes named alone, when the others are mentioned in general. After the ascension of our Lord, it is he who directs and governs : he leads the assembly in which a successor to the apostle who had prevaricated, is chosen : after the descent of the Holy Ghost, he first speaks to the people, and announces to them Jesus Christ : he performs the first miracle, and, in the name of his brethren, addresses the synedrium : he punishes the crime of Ananias : he opens the gates of the Church to the Gentiles, and presides at the first council at Jerusalem. To speak with him, St. Paul goes to Jerusalem, three years after his conversion, and remains with him fifteen days.

The more the Church was extended, and the more its constitution was formed, the more necessary did the power with which Peter had been invested become,—the more evident was the need of a head which united the members in one body, of a point and centre of unity. But as the existence of the Church was to know no other bounds than those of time, the dignity and power that were conferred upon Peter for the preservation of this unity, could not die with him, but must have been transferred to others : they were granted less to him and for the Church of his time than to his successors and for the Church of following ages. Accordingly, succession by ordination was the means, by which from the beginning the power left by Christ in his Church was con-



tinued : thus the power of the apostles descended to the bishops, their successors, and thus as Peter died bishop of the Church of Rome, where he sealed his doctrine with his blood, the primacy which he had received would be continued in him by whom he was there succeeded. It was not without a particular interposition of Providence that this pre-eminence was granted to the city of Rome, and that it became the depository of ecclesiastical supremacy. This city, which rose in the midway between the east and the west, by its position, by its proximity to the sea, by its dignity, as capital of the Roman empire, being open on all sides to communication even with the most distant nations, was evidently more than any other adapted to become the centre of the universal Church. Rome, until now the sacred abode of paganism, the assembling place of all nations and of all religions, was destined to be, to the Church of the new covenant, formed of all the kingdoms of the earth, what Jerusalem had been to the Church of the old law : there, where paganism had in its many varied forms struck its deepest and strongest roots, it was meet that the power of the new religion and Church, concentrated in its head, should enter into conflict with it, and in victory subdue it.

There are not wanting, in the first three centuries, testimonies and facts, some of which directly attest, and others presuppose, the supremacy of the Roman Church and of its bishops. The first testimony is that of an apostolic father, St. Ignatius, who, in the superscription of his letter to the Romans, gives this supremacy to their Church, naming it the *directress of the testament of love*,\* that is of all Christianity. After him, the disciple of another apostolic father, St. Irenæus, declares

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\* He first says : “ ἡ τις προκαθεται ἐν τοπῷ χωρίῳ Ρωμαίων,” in which words he does not confine the authority, but describes only the situation, of the Church of Rome. He afterwards names this Church προκαθήμενη της ἀγάπης ; these words do not signify *præsidens in caritate*, as the old Latin translation has rendered them, for then St. Ignatius would have said, ἐν ἀγάπῃ : ἀγάπη signifies, in the same manner as ἐκκλησία, sometimes a smaller assembly of the faithful at the sacred love-feasts, sometimes the entire body of the faithful of all the Church—a communion founded on love and preserved by love.

the same in terms clear and precise. He is opposing, to the pretended, secret traditions of the Gnostics, the genuine and well-known traditions of the apostles, as they had been preserved by bishops who had succeeded them in continued succession in the Churches which they had founded; and he exemplifies in particular the Church of Rome: "for it is necessary," he says, "that the whole Church, that is, the faithful of the whole world, should be in communion with this Church, on account of its more powerful authority; in which communion the faithful of the whole world have preserved the tradition that was delivered by the apostles."\*

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\* "Ad hanc enim ecclesiam propter potentiorē principalitatem necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam, hoc est, eos qui sunt undique fideles; in qua semper ab his qui sunt undique conservata est ea quæ est ab apostolis traditio."—Adv. Hær. l. iii. c. 3. For three hundred years there have not been wanting writers who have endeavoured to wrest these words from their evident signification. The earlier attempts of this kind, made by Salmasius, Grabe, Mosheim, Paulus, have been ably defeated by Massuet, Valsecchi (*Verità della Chiesa Catt.*, Padova, 1787, p. 166 et seqq.) and Katerkamp, in his work "On the Supremacy of the Apostle Peter and his Successors" (Munster, 1820.) We will here consider only the latest explanation of this passage, given by Giesler, in his "Manual of Church History" (l. p. 176, 3rd ed.) He thus interpolates this passage: "With this Church, on account of its greater antiquity (*principalitatem*), the whole Church, that is, all the faithful, will naturally concur." It is easy to prove that so illogical a conclusion could never have been imagined by the learned bishop of Lyons. He wishes to prove that the doctrines taught by the apostles, have been preserved pure and entire from their time. For this purpose he appeals to the uninterrupted succession of bishops in Churches founded by the apostles, and shows this succession in one of these Churches, the Church of Rome; for if the faith have been preserved pure in this Church, it must have continued so in all others, as it has always been an anxious care of these Churches to remain in a communion of faith with Rome. "When, therefore," concludes St. Irenæus, "you know the faith of this Church, you have learned the faith of the others." This argumentation is clear. According to Giesler's translation, this would have been St. Irenæus' conclusion. "It is sufficient to adduce the succession of the bishops of Rome; for as that Church was founded by the apostles, and is consequently one of the most ancient, its faith must naturally be that of all others; for they, as being more recent, can have no other faith than that which it, the more ancient, professes." The heretics would certainly have required a proof of this necessity of an unanimity of belief, which was founded on the superiority of antiquity: they would have answered that the younger Churches might have departed from the faith of the elder; that they knew not of



Tertullian, also, when a Montanist, although unwillingly, bore witness to the supreme dignity of the bishop

any natural law, any physical necessity (this is expressed by *necesse est*) which prevented this departure; and consequently that the faith of the modern Churches was not necessarily represented by the faith of the more ancient. But when, on the contrary, St. Irenæus adduces it as an acknowledged fact, that all these Churches carefully preserve an union of faith with the Church of Rome, on account of the superiority granted to it by God, no objection of this kind could be urged against him. Again, if "*potentior principalitas*" signified only "greater antiquity," how could the Church of Rome claim pre-eminence above the Churches of Antioch and Ephesus? Giesler imagines that as Rome was the only apostolical, and consequently the most ancient, Church in the west, St. Irenæus might have argued for the necessity of a conformity of faith in all the western Churches with the Church of Rome. But St. Irenæus was an oriental; he had been taught at Smyrna, by a disciple of the apostle St. John. He wrote in Greek, and against heresies that had arisen in the east, which had their chief seat there, and the greater numbers of adherents. His argument is evidently applied to the *universal Church*; and he gives the "*potentior principalitas*" to the Church of Rome, not only in regard to the west, but also to the east. He makes no distinction between the two parts, but after having named the Church of Rome, appeals immediately to the tradition of the Churches of Smyrna and Ephesus. Finally, the words "*potentior principalitas*" will not bear the translation "greater antiquity." In what sense St. Irenæus employed these words can be best learned from parallel passages of his writings. In book iii. c. 38, he says, "*Et sic principalitatem quidem habebit in omnibus Deus, quoniam et solus infectus et prior omnium et omnibus ut sint, ipse est causa, reliqua vero omnia in subjectione manent Dei.*" Here the signification is plain. In Greek it is, "*προτείνει εν πασιν ο Θεος,*" and probably in our passage the expression was *προτειον*, thus "*δια το ικανωτερον προτειον.*" Giesler produces a passage from Tertullian (*De Præs.*) in which *principalitas* signifies *beginning, origin*: but Tertullian amply explains the ordinary signification of the word. "*Dispicere superest, principalitas ubi sit; id est qui cui præest.*" St. Irenæus understands by the "*potentior principalitas*" the same as St. Augustin, when (*Ep. 43*) he says, that in this Church "*semper viguit apostolicæ cathedræ principatus;*" and (*De Bap.*) "*Apostolatus Petri principatus cuilibet episcopatui præferendus.*" When St. Irenæus says in conclusion, "*In qua semper ab his qui sunt undique,*" he thereby points out the effect of the "authority" of the Church of Rome, and the consequent uniformity of faith in it and in other Churches; that the faithful throughout the whole world were in it, that is, in communion with it at the centre of unity, which had always preserved the traditions of the apostles: *conservata est* is, therefore, a translation of *διαφυλαττεσθαι* or *συντηρηεισθαι*. (It may not perhaps be unnecessary to remark, that the original Greek text of the book of St. Irenæus *Adv. Hæreses* is lost, with



of Rome. For, when bitterly censuring a decree of the pope, in which he declared the power of the Church in forgiving sins, Tertullian objects to him that he considered or named himself bishop of bishops, a title which might be made to correspond to the heathen Pontifex Maximus.

The testimonies that are contained in the writings of St. Cyprian, *On the Unity of the Church*, and in his Epistles, *On the Church of Rome and its Bishops*, are intimately connected with his principles of the essence of the Church. Peter, he often repeats, is the foundation upon which the Church, with immoveable firmness, is built. When Our Lord conferred upon him this distinction, the Church was then concentrated in the few disciples of Jesus: it was not yet composed of many communities, springing one from another: then the different Churches and the universal Church were one. St. Cyprian, therefore, considers the apostle Peter as the depository of the episcopacy, as well as of the supremacy: he derives the power of bishops from the high authority with which he was invested, and every bishop is a successor of St. Peter, as he is an inheritor of his power of binding and of loosing, and is the foundation of the Church committed to his care: all the members of this Church must, therefore, be united with him, and subjected to him.\* Upon Peter then the whole Church is founded by its unity: he is the *origin*, the source, and the centre of this unity of the universal Church;† and

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the exception of some fragments preserved by other writers. The Latin version was made either during the lifetime of St. Irenæus, or soon after his death.)

\* “Dominus noster, cujus præcepta et monita observare debemus, episcopi honorem et ecclesiæ suæ rationem disponens, in evangelio loquitur et dicit Petro, Ego tibi dico, &c.—et tibi dabo claves, &c. Inde per temporum et successionem vices, episcoporum ordinatio et ecclesiæ ratio decurrit, ut ecclesia super episcopos constituatur, et omnis actus ecclesiæ per eosdem præpositos gubernetur.”—Ep. xxvii.

† “Baptismus unus est et ecclesia una a Christo Domino supra Petrum origine unitatis et ratione fundata.”—Ep. lxx. “Supra quem Dominus ædificavit ecclesiam suam, et unde unitatis originem instituit et ostendit.”—Ep. lxxiii.

in this consists the superiority which he enjoyed over the other apostles. Christ, indeed, after his resurrection, conferred equal power on all his apostles, but he raised Peter above his colleagues by appointing him to be the author and the representative of ecclesiastical unity.\* Peter conveyed this high prerogative to the Church of Rome; the episcopal throne of this Church is the throne of Peter (*cathedra, locus Petri*): the Church of Rome is the first, the principal Church:† the bishop of Rome is the successor, the representative of Peter,‡ and, therefore, possesses all the distinctive power, all the authority

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\* “*Quamvis apostolis omnibus post resurrectionem suam parem potestatem tribuat ac dicat, sicut misit me, &c., tamen ut unitatem manifestaret, unitatis ejusdem originem ab uno incipientem sua auctoritate disposuit. Hoc erant utique et cæteri apostoli quod fuit Petrus, pari consortio præditi, et honoris et potestatis: sed exordium ab unitate proficiscitur: (primatus Petro datur) ut una ecclesia (et cathedra una) monstretur. Hanc ecclesiæ unitatem qui non tenet, tenere se fidem credit? Qui ecclesiæ renititur et resistit (qui cathedram Petri, super quem fundata est ecclesia, deserit) in ecclesia se esse confidit?*” De Unit. Eccl. p. 349; ed. Wirceb. The words enclosed within parentheses, are not found in many ancient manuscripts; on which account, not only the Oxford editor, but also Baluze, consider them as interpolations and have therefore omitted them. This passage was however, cited with these words, by Pope Pelagius II, in a letter, written in the sixth century, to the bishops of Istria. As far as they affect the opinion of St. Cyprian, it is indifferent whether they be genuine or not, for they contain nothing which cannot be found in other parts of his writings. Thus, Epist. lxxi.:—“*Nec Petrus, quem primum Dominus elegit, et super quem ædificavit ecclesiam suam, cum Paulus de circumcissione postmodum disceptaret, vindicavit sibi aliquid insolenter aut arroganter assumpsit, ut diceret se primatum tenere, et obtemperari a novellis et posteris sibi potius oportere.*” Of which words, this is the signification: Peter had the right to appeal to his superiority of rank; but on this occasion, when St. Paul justly reproved him, this might have seemed pride or arrogance. It has been said, that the words *novelli* and *poster* prove that the primacy of St. Peter was only a priority of apostleship, founded on his early vocation: but St. Cyprian is speaking of a duty of obedience, which would not have followed from a mere priority of time: besides, St. Peter was not the first whom our Lord called to the apostleship, so that the words “*primum elegit*” must signify, “the Lord chose him to be the first, the chief of his apostles.”

† “*Navigare audent ad Petri cathedram et ecclesiam principalem unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est.*”—Ep. lv.

‡ “*Factus est Cornelius episcopus—cum Fabiani locus, id est locus Petri et gradus cathedræ sacerdotalis vacaret.*”—Ep. lii.

of his predecessor; he is the source, the centre of unity; and as this consists herein, that the Church should be guided by its different pastors in one mind and consent, so is Peter, and after him, the bishop of Rome, the principle from which this unanimity, this harmonious guidance springs, and by which it is to be for ever preserved: his Church is the root, the mother (*radix et matrix*) of the Catholic Church. As every individual bishop is in his diocese the root and centre of unity,—as by him the whole community is held together, and through him becomes a Church, and as he, who is not united with him is not in the Church,—in the same manner the bishop of Rome stands in the centre of the universal Church; all the bishops of the world must be either directly or indirectly in communication with him: thus is the union of all preserved:\* in this sense, all the episcopal sees form one see, and all the flocks of the faithful form one large flock.

St. Cyprian does not speak of this supreme power of the Roman pontiff merely on a passing occasion; he exhorts him to exercise it. Marcianus, bishop of Arles, had attached himself to the party of the Novatians, and had adopted their doctrines on the pardon of sins. Faustinus of Lyons, and the other bishops of the province, denounced him to the see of Rome, and Faustinus communicated also with the bishop of Carthage. He, as his authority did not extend to the Churches of Gaul, conjured the pope to terminate this affair by his power of supreme pastor of the Church: he wrote to Stephen, soliciting him to direct letters to the bishops of the province and to the Church of Arles, in virtue of which Marcianus should be deposed, and another bishop substituted in his place. He adduced the decrees of Cornelius and Lucius respecting the admission to communion of the lapsed; and, lastly, besought the pope to

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\* Hence in his letter to pope Cornelius, he says, that he had taken care, “ Ut te collegæ nostri et communionem tuam, id est Catholicæ ecclesiæ unitatem pariter et caritatem probarent firmiter ac tenerent.” Ep. xlv. And in his epistle to Antonianus: “ Ut sciret (Cornelius) te secum hoc est cum Catholica ecclesia communicare.”



inform him, whom he had appointed to fill the see of Marcianus.\*

Other facts, from which the supremacy of the bishop of Rome must be inferred, have been before related: they are, the authority exercised by pope Victor in the controversies on the celebration of Easter, the complaints that were carried to Rome against Dionysius of Alexandria, and the answers that were returned. Worthy of remark is the first example of a formal appeal to the pope by a deposed bishop. Two Spanish bishops, Basilides and Martial, had been deposed from their sees as *libellatici*, and as guilty also of other crimes: Felix and Sabinus were appointed to succeed them. Basilides, who had consented to the deposition by a voluntary abdication, and submission to the penance imposed upon him, repented of his self-humiliation, went to Rome, and by his false and deceitful statements, persuaded the pope to restore him to his bishopric. Two priests of this Church, and Felix, bishop of Saragossa, wrote immediately to St. Cyprian that they might gain for themselves a powerful support in their opposition to the

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\* “Dirigantur in provinciam et ad plebem Arelate consistentem a te litteræ, quibus abstento Marciano alius in locum ejus substituatur. Servandus est enim antecessorum nostrorum beatorum martyrum Cornelii et Lucii honor gloriosus: illi enim dandam esse lapsis pacem censuerunt, &c.” Ep. lxxvii. The word *honor* frequently occurs in the writings of St. Cyprian, signifying *auctoritas* or *potestas*; as in a former note he says that all the apostles were “*pari consortio præditi et honoris et potestatis*.” When St. Cyprian in his letter to the Pope says, “therefore, most beloved brother, the vast body of priests is so cemented together by mutual concord, and bound by the chain of unity, that if any one of our college should be guilty of heresy, or should attempt to tear and to waste the flock of Christ, the others, as good and merciful shepherds, should succour the sheep of the Lord, and collect them into a flock.” He does not mean to say, that every bishop can proceed with equal authority in such a proceeding. If so, why did he first write to obtain the authority of the Roman pontiff, if he could have terminated the affair himself? He wishes to declare that every bishop, in proportion to his position and influence, can and ought to provide for the general welfare of the Church, and, when required, of particular flocks. His co-operation may be exercised in informing the Pope of what it may be necessary to ordain and decree: but to interfere in the affairs of a foreign Church, to depose or to appoint bishops, belongs only to him who sits upon the *chair of Peter*.

papal decree. If St. Cyprian could have seen in this proceeding of pope Stephen, an usurpation of power, he certainly would not have failed to declare it: but no expression of any such sentiment is to be found in the letter, in which he approves of the deposition of the two bishops: he only attributes a new crime to Basilides, who, by a false statement of facts, and by concealing his own offences, had deceived and misled the pope.

The history of these early ages of the Church presents to us many events which presuppose at least this high dignity of the Roman pontiff. Amongst these we might enumerate the constant care of the different Churches to transmit to Rome an account of any important transactions occurring within them. Of this we have many examples in the African Church, recorded by St. Cyprian in his epistles. The proceedings of the synod against Felicissimus were immediately made known to Cornelius, bishop of Rome; and St. Cyprian excused himself to the same pope, that he had not sooner informed him of the consecration of the anti-bishop Fortunatus. The African bishops also communicated to Cornelius their decrees regarding the lapsed. Even heretics, although against their will, bore testimony to the supremacy of the pope: thus the Theodosians defined the time in which the faith of the Church had been changed, by the succession of the Roman bishops: they said, that the true faith had been preserved until the time of Victor, and that under Zephyrinus it had been corrupted—as in civil history we should mark the period of an event by the name of the sovereign in whose reign it had occurred. This authority of the pope was not unknown to the pagans. This is proved not only from the celebrated sentence of the emperor Aurelian, but also by a remark made by St. Cyprian respecting the persecutor, Decius. In his letter to Antonianus,\* he says, this tyrant

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\* "Cum tyrannus infestus sacerdotibus Dei fanda atque infanda comminaretur, cum multo patientius et tolerabilius audiret levare adversus se æmulum principem, quam constitui Romæ Dei sacerdotem Cornelius. . . . tyrannum armis et bello postmodum victum prior sacerdotio suo vicit."

would receive with more composure the intelligence that a rival prince had risen in the empire than that a bishop of Rome had been elected. The pagan emperor and the pagan high-priest viewed the high-priest of the Christians as a formidable and hated competitor, (Tertullian, as we have seen, named him, in scorn, the Pontifex Maximus); and St. Cyprian adds, that before the tyrant had been conquered by arms in war, Cornelius had conquered him by his priesthood, when, despite the attempts of Decius, he had been made the true high-priest of God, by his elevation to the *chair of Peter*.

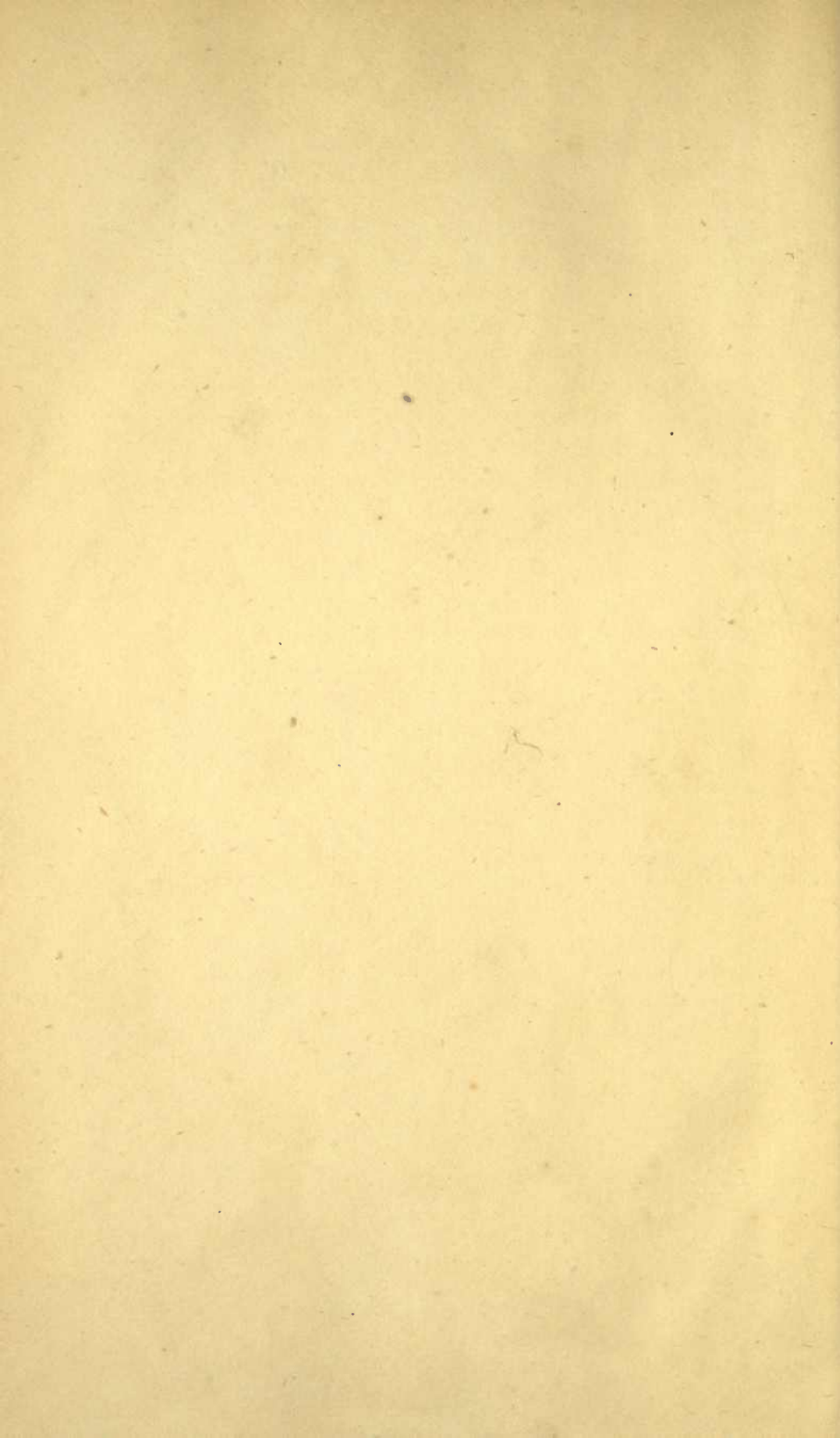
But we must confess that the power of the Roman pontiff, and his relation to the universal Church, were not yet fully developed. Like all other essential parts of the constitution of the Church, the supremacy was known and acknowledged from the beginning as a divine institution, but it required time to unfold its faculties: it assumed by degrees the determined form, in which the bishop of Rome exercised systematically the authority entrusted to him for the preservation of the internal and external unity of the Church. It was in the natural order of events, that the formation of particular Churches should precede, and that the connexion of the bishop with his clergy and flock should be firmly established: then came the time for the institution of the metropolitan authority; and as the union of the Churches became more formal and more close, the supremacy came forth, the operations of which were less frequent in times that were employed in propagating the faith, in founding and in establishing new Churches; but it displayed itself the more evidently the more the unity of the Church was, in later times, shaken by dangerous assaults, and the more it was torn by heresy and schism.

END OF VOLUME THE FIRST.













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